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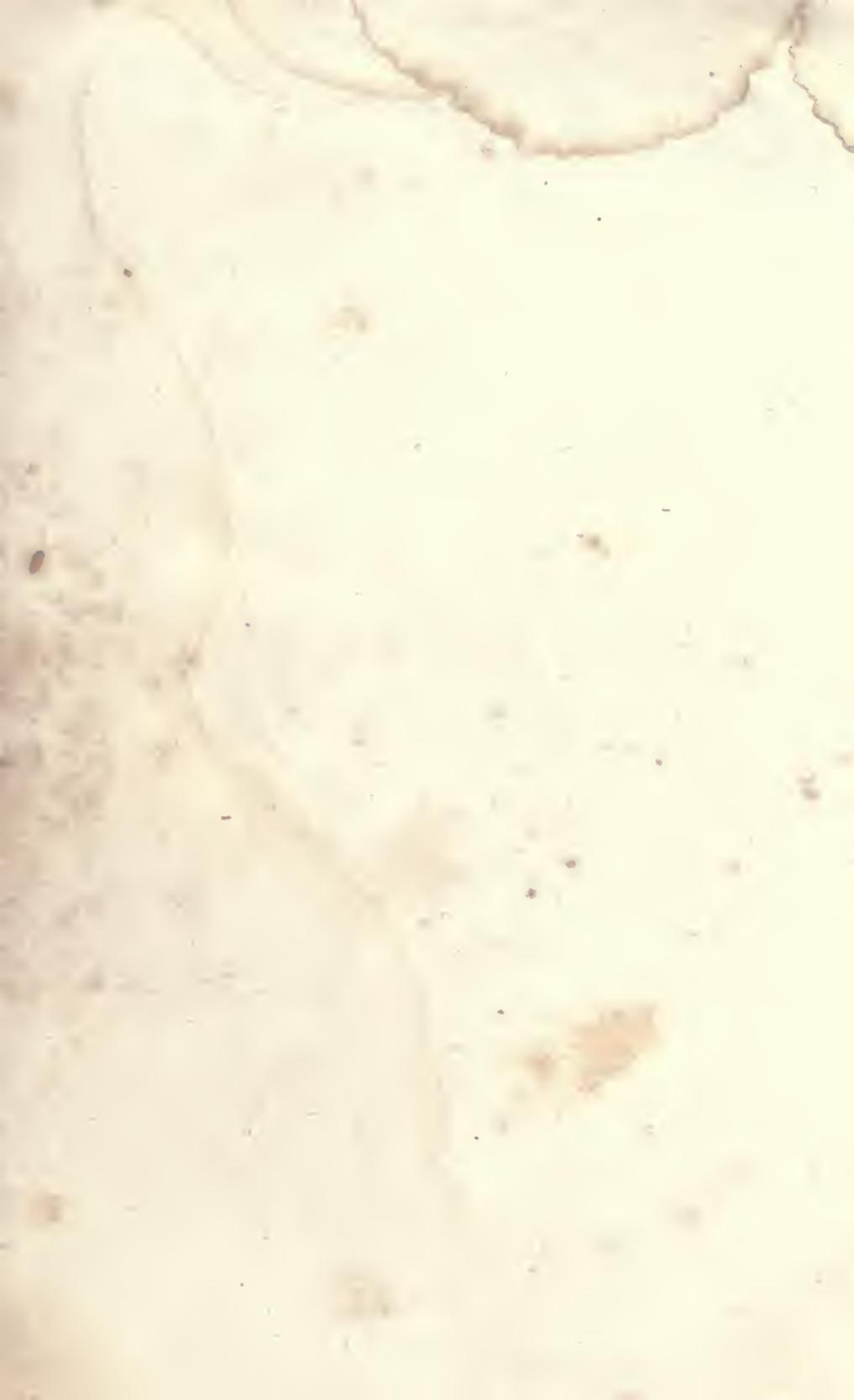
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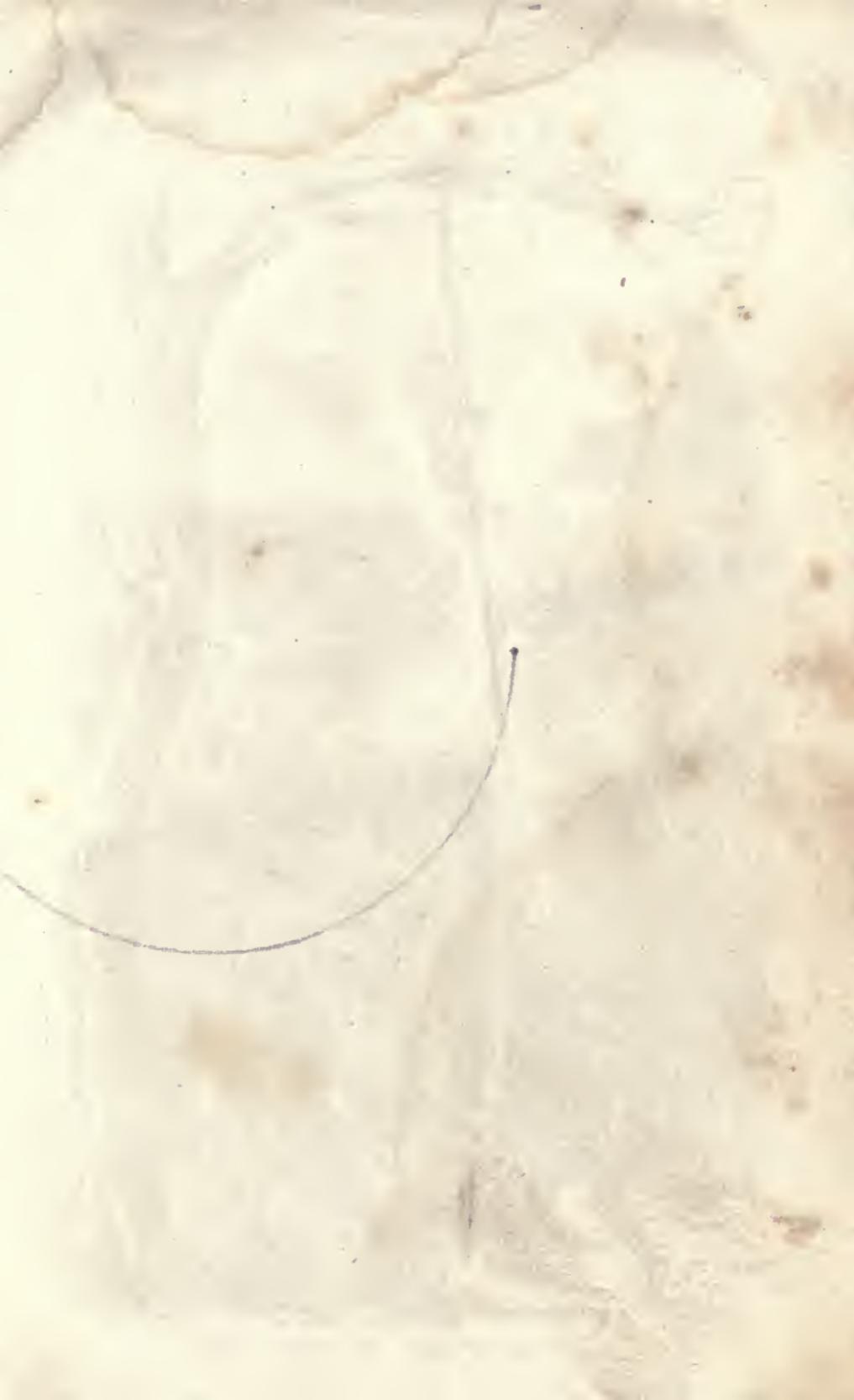
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FELCH-CO.

THE QUALE. p. 200.

FIVE YEARS A CAPTIVE

AMONG THE

BLACK-FEET INDIANS:

OR,

A THRILLING NARRATIVE

OF THE ADVENTURES, PERILS AND SUFFERING ENDURED
BY JOHN DIXON AND HIS COMPANIONS, AMONG
THE SAVAGES OF THE NORTWEST TER-
RITORY OF NORTH AMERICA.

NEVER BEFORE PUBLISHED.

BY SYLVESTER CRAVES, JUN.

Fiction's web is woven, will,
But "truth is often strager still."

C O L U M B I S :

O S G O O D & P E A R C E P R I N T E R S .

1 8 5 8

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BY SYLVESTER CRAKES, JUN.,

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the Southern District of Ohio.

INTRODUCTION.

JOHN DIXON emigrated to Oregon, from the North of England, in the year 1801. His object, in connection with a number of others, who sailed in the same vessel was to connect himself in the capacity of employee with the "Hudson's Bay Company," engaged in the fur trade. The notes of Mr. Dixon, from which this work is compiled, does not inform us what county in England he hailed from, or the name of the ship in which he sailed. He tells us, however, that on the 6th of July, in the year 1801, they landed at the mouth of the Columbia river, in Oregon, and shortly after entered the service of the Fur Company; in which situation he continued until the 15th of June, 1802, at which time, owing to a misunderstanding between himself and two others, on the one part, and some of the officers of the Company on the other, he and his companions, William Thornton and Jack Moulton, determined to leave the service of the Company and seek their fortunes together, in their own way, in a remote part of the Territory, uncontrolled and undisturbed by the mandates of the Company.

Preparatory to starting, they had furnished themselves with provisions sufficient for one month, by which time they supposed they would become established in their

new quarters ; after which, they doubted not, but that by an occasional traffic with the Indians, and the use of their unerring rifles, they would be enabled to furnish themselves with an ample supply of all the food necessary for the comfort of trappers. And for clothing, they had, as they supposed, sufficient to last them one year ; at the end of which time, (provided they were successful,) they could return to the Company's agency, and procure a fresh supply.

During the time they were employed by the Company, they had frequently heard old trappers speak of the abundance of fur-bearing animals on the head waters of the Missouri, on the east side of the Rocky Mountains. And having collected all the information which they deemed necessary, in order to reach that region, they set out on their journey ; and passing over many incidents and difficulties which they encountered and surmounted in the way, on the 12th of July following they reached what they supposed to be the country for which they started, and with alacrity set about preparing their camp for future use and comfort.

From this point, the many astonishing and tragical scenes in the life of John Dixon will commence. And after the reader has perused the pages of this work, he may well exclaim, "Verily, truth is sometimes stranger than fiction!"

In conclusion of our introductory remarks, we would inform the reader that the facts narrated in this work, are compiled from Mr. Dixon's own notes ; who, after having been five years a captive among the Black-Feet

Indians, made his escape into New Mexico, where he obtained employment in the capacity of shepherd to Castra Urego, a wealthy Spaniard of that country, with the design (as his notes inform us) to raise sufficient funds to return to England, where he intended to publish this work. But, unfortunately, he was taken sick and died, before his term of service with Castra Urego expired. And, until recently, it was not known, except by his relations and immediate friends, that John Dixon, the English captive among the American Indians, ever lived; nor would the facts ever have been known, probably, but for accident, which brought them to light.

During the winter of 1855, Mr. Winter, an American gentleman, was spending some time in Santa Fe, transacting business for a mercantile house in New Orleans. Upon a certain occasion, he concluded to spend a few days in the country, at the residence of a gentleman with whom he had formed a partial acquaintance during his residence at Santa Fe, and who had cordially invited a visit from him, at his ranch, and the acceptance of his hospitality.

It was during the visit of Mr. W. at the ranch of Don Zeno, son of Castra Urego, that the notes of Mr. Dixon were first brought to the knowledge of any one who could read and comprehend them. After the death of Mr. D., Castra Urego, although unable to read his (Mr. D.'s) notes, had carefully filed them away, and after the death of his father, Don Zeno preserved them as a curiosity; and on the occasion of Mr. W.'s visit, the notes of Mr. Dixon were presented, as he supposed, to

amuse him, when he perused them with much interest. Learning these facts from Mr. W., some two years after, the Editor, on his (Mr. W.'s) subsequent return to New Mexico, deputed him to obtain from Don Zeno the manuscript of Mr. Dixon; which, after some delay and considerable difficulty, he finally obtained.

In compiling this work, the Editor has strictly followed the facts in Mr. D.'s notes, elaborating them as little as possible, in order to present them to the public in an intelligible, and, at the same time, interesting form.

EDITOR.

FIVE YEARS A CAPTIVE.

CHAPTER I.

ON the 12th day of July, 1802, after a long, tedious, and, in some respects, dangerous journey, we arrived on the east side of the Rocky Mountains, and immediately set about preparing our camp, in order to devote our attention regularly to the business of trapping. Having reached the point for which we started in safety, our spirits were greatly elated, in view of the success which we doubted not would attend our enterprise. At least, we considered ourselves forever safe from the insults and oppressions practiced by the officers and place-men of the Hudson's Bay Company, upon all those whom they deem under their authority.

This Company, like the East India Company, has become one of considerable power and pretension ; and from year to year, is extending its influence and strengthening its grasp upon the interests and energies of the vast extent of territory over which it claims to preside. Its rule is despotic, crushing and degrading, not only to the aborigines of the country, but to all those who

are in its employ, or under its influences, who are so unfortunate as to be neither office-holders or favorites.

Having said thus much in digression, we will return to the point from whence we started. After crossing the Rocky Mountains, we made choice of a locality for our encampment, which we thought peculiarly favorable to our purpose. It was near the junction of the Missouri with one of its tributary rivers, at the foot of a spur of the Rocky Mountains. This locality was not only protected by the mountains, but was surrounded by a beautiful grove of young timber, which gave the place an appearance of extreme loveliness and security. In the immediate vicinity, at the foot of the mountain, gushed up, amid the rocks, a spring of never-failing water, clear as a crystal, cool and refreshing.

As before narrated, it was on the 12th of July that we reached the place of our encampment, and in three days from the time of our arrival, we had every thing arranged in our camp for security and comfort, as far as our limited means would permit, and immediately set about prospecting for the most advantageous points in our vicinity for the use of our traps, endeavoring, at the same time, to procure something upon which to subsist; our slender stock of provisions, laid in at the commencement of our enterprise, being about exhausted. We left our camp early in the morning, and directed our course up the tributary river, paying due regard, as we passed along the stream, to the indications of the proximity of a plentiful supply of such fur-bearing animals as we most desired to take. This part of the business was

more particularly intrusted to Jack Moulton, as he was an old trapper, having been in the employ of the Hudson's Bay Company, in that capacity, for ten years.

Whilst Moulton was engaged as the principal trapper, Thornton and myself were to attend to the hunting ; and whilst he hunted on the right bank of the river, I carefully scoured the left ; but we were neither of us to wander farther from the river than the report of our guns could be heard. In case the report of either rifle was heard, the others were to proceed immediately toward the point from which it came, and render all necessary assistance in taking and securing the game, or in any other exigence.

We had proceeded in this manner until about 11 o'clock, when I heard the report of a rifle, probably a mile distant, in the direct line of the river, as I supposed. I immediately started for that point, and in a few minutes had the satisfaction of coming up with Jack Moulton, very composedly sitting astride of a fine fat elk, upon the bank of the river. A short time after, Will Thornton came up, who seemed remarkably well pleased with our acquisition, in the line of good living.

Jack informed us that he discovered this beautiful animal making for the water, about seventy-five yards in advance of him, and that he stood still until the elk proceeded to the water and commenced drinking, when, without moving a step from where he stood, he fired—and after making two or three bounds to the rear, the elk dropped dead upon the bank. Jack certainly made a very fortunate and deadly shot, the ball passing through

the body and penetrating the heart of the animal.— Having removed the viscera from the elk, we swung him to a bush, sufficiently high to secure the venison from the wolves, and continued our march up the river, in the order mentioned.

About three o'clock, P. M., in crossing a small stream connecting with the river upon the banks of which we had been hunting, I discovered an otter, perched upon a log over the stream, and shot it. This piece of luck I regarded as quite an acquisition, and felt proud of my day's work.

The fur of this animal is regarded as valuable, and we were well pleased to find it an inhabitant of our new hunting-ground. Soon after I discharged my rifle, in shooting the otter, I heard the report of another, in the direction of the river, and it being about the time we had agreed to meet, in order to return to camp, I immediately started in that direction, and had no difficulty in finding Jack, for I heard him whistling before I got within one hundred yards of him. He had killed nothing since the elk, but discharged his gun to bring Thornton and myself to him, that we might return to camp. Thornton made his appearance soon after my arrival, and reported having seen nothing during the day worth a load of ammunition. We, however, consoled him with the hope that his fortunate star would yet loom above the horizon, and perhaps eclipse ours. Will laughed merrily at his ill luck, and said it was well for such hunters as he was that our stock in trade belonged to tenants in common, and there were only three

of us. Moulton told us that he had discovered abundant signs of otter, beaver, raccoon, mink, and several other species of furred animals; and last, though not least, that he was sure there were plenty of bears in this region. This news was, of course, to us, highly gratifying, as hunting and trapping were the great objects of our penetrating these vast regions, far from civilized life.

In fine spirits we retraced our steps to camp, taking with us, of course, the carcass of the elk which Moulton had killed in the morning, and which we found secure from molestation. In order to get him to camp, we procured a pole, about ten feet long, and having lashed the elk across the middle of it, Moulton and myself took the opposite ends, each upon one shoulder, and Thornton occasionally relieved us. In this way we carried him to the camp, a distance of some five miles.

Having secured our venison, we broiled a portion of it, and made an excellent supper. We found it tender, and of a fine, rich flavor, and we all enjoyed it exceedingly. The day had been very warm, and we were all tired; and after our evening's repast, we were soon happy in the embrace of Morpheus. About midnight, we were awakened by the howling of wolves—seemingly from almost every point of the compass. Although this outcry was to us nothing unusual or strange in itself, yet in point of proximity and volume we had heard nothing of the kind equal to it. From the doleful noise produced by the various sounds, of chords and discords, one unacquainted with this music of the forest would

have supposed that the mountains and valleys were alive with these depredators upon the rights of the more harmless sojourners of this country. Our sleep, however, was too refreshing to be long broken by these stragglers of the night. Knowing that our lodge was strong enough to resist the attacks of any animal that we had reason to suppose inhabited these mountains, a feeling of conscious security guarded our rest. Our lodge was built of solid logs, twelve by fourteen feet in extent, and ten feet high. The opening was sufficiently capacious to admit one man at a time, and the door was a stout oak puncheon, four inches in thickness, swung upon wooden hinges, and fastened on the inside by means of a wooden bolt. The roof was also composed of puncheons, sufficiently strong to resist rain and snow, or the efforts of any animal less powerful than the elephant or mastodon.

Although this mechanical appearance of our dwelling might not have inspired the imagination of a noble of London or Paris, yet with us it was the very *beau ideal* of neatness, elegance, and propriety; especially so, when we take into consideration the fact that the only tools we had to work with, in the erection of this sumptuous building, were two axes, an auger, and our jack-knives, which we had brought with us from the station at Vancouver.

Our sleep during the night had been refreshing; and we awoke about the time the sun was making his appearance in the eastern horizon. The sky was clear, the air balmy, and all nature, as far as the eye could

reach, seemed rejoicing in its wild and gorgeous beauty. The mountains, the hillocks, and the vales seemed lavish of their smiles, decked as they were in the beautiful robes with which the God of Nature had clad them thousands of years ago. And the birds, those sweet choristers, whose dulcet notes were keyed by the fingers of the Almighty, how delightful, how ravishing their songs!

We found a rare species of bird as an inhabitant of these mountain fastnesses, which I wish to describe more particularly. To me its manners and appearance were quite novel, and I am satisfied that in Europe there are none like it. I am not an ornithologist, and can not describe the bird technically; but in size it was about equal to the robin, with alternate black and yellow spots covering the body, excepting the wings; which are a beautiful bright crimson. It is a delightful singer, with notes clear, shrill and melodious, which are only heard early in the morning and during the summer months. The Indians, I learned subsequently, attach a degree of sacredness to this bird, and will, under no circumstances, permit it to be killed or in any way molested, believing they are messengers to them, indicative of good fortune, peace and plenty. These birds are not numerous, and it is only occasionally that the adventurer among these mountains gets sight of one. They are exceedingly shy and timid, and on the first alarm disappear.

The natives of these regions call this bird *Kiwah*, which signifies, in the Black-Feet language, "sacred."

Having disposed of our breakfast at an early hour, we started, with our traps and rifles, up the tributary river, in order to try our luck trapping.

Jack Moulton disposed of the traps along the river, as, according to his judgment, seemed most judicious, and at such intervals as his experience approved.

The traps having been thus arranged, we concluded to spend the remainder of the day hunting; and, after taking our lunch, we separated, agreeing to meet about three o'clock, at a certain point on the river, in order to return to camp.

We determined, to-day, to strike out some distance from the river, every man to pursue his own course and make the best of his time. After having gone about three miles back from the river, I perceived five spotted antelopes. With a great deal of caution, I succeeded in getting within shooting distance of them, and, selecting one of the finest, I fired, and had the satisfaction to see him drop to the ground. All the others darted away, as if Old Nick were after them, and were soon out of my sight. After loading my rifle, I went to the spot where I had seen my game drop, but to my astonishment it was not there. I found blood in any quantity, but where the antelope was, was more than I could tell. After searching for some time, I finally came upon its bloody trail, and pursuing it about a mile, came up with the expiring animal, just in time to be in at the death. The antelope had sought the shelter of a thicket of young timber on the side of the mountain, as

a proper place to yield up the ghost. I was not long in removing the entrails, and securely elevating it to the top of a bush. These antelopes, of which there are several kinds in this country, are a species of deer, and are a most graceful animal. They are extremely active, and their motion is majestic and lofty.

Having made this disposition of my game, I returned to the point on the river designated, to meet Thornton and Moulton, for our return to the camp. After waiting half an hour, I had the satisfaction of seeing them coming together.

Thornton, in the course of his hunt, had the fortune, or rather misfortune, to fall in with a brown bear, and having discharged his rifle and wounded it, like a true soldier, (as these bears uniformly are,) it struck a straight line for Thornton's headquarters. Thornton no sooner discovered this manœuvre on the part of the bear, than, deeming discretion the better policy, he hastily beat a retreat, whilst the bear, with commendable zeal, was bringing up the rear. What the result would have been, had not Thornton, in his retreat, accidentally have crossed the path of Moulton, is somewhat doubtful. Moulton thought the chances in favor of the bear, for, although Will seemed to be making his fifteen knots an hour, yet the bear seemed good for twenty.

In this state of the case, all the resources of Moulton, acquired during ten years' experience in a trapper's life, were brought into immediate requisition. He threw himself in advance of Thornton, and told him, as he valued his life, to stop; which Thornton, although badly

frightened, did. Moulton then drew his knife, and ordered Thornton to do the same. The bear, seeing there was to be a fight, checked his motion, and advanced with caution and precision. Moulton told Thornton to stand firmly to his post, and in case he failed to bring the bear down with his rifle, to be ready with his knife—for this, with them, would be the last resort in a desperate case. Moulton reserved his fire until the bear was within ten or twelve feet of them, when he drew up, and aiming the ball for its forehead, fired. The bear dropped in its tracks, and, although exceedingly tenacious of life, unless shot in a vital part, immediately expired. He measured in length nine feet, and would probably have weighed a thousand pounds. Thornton and Moulton brought in the skin to camp, which was sufficiently large to make an excellent bed-cover.

There are three species of bears which inhabit this country, namely: the black, the brown, and the grizzly bear. The grizzly bear is the most formidable competitor, in animal similitude, with which the hunter has to contend; and the brown bear, in this respect, is not much his inferior. The black bear is much smaller and more harmless. We now returned to camp, and having disposed of our frugal meal, and spent an hour in recounting the adventures of the day and making various conjectures as to our success in our trapping enterprise, retired to rest.

The wolves, although somewhat annoying, were not so vociferous last night. At an early hour this morning we were astir, in high hopes of realizing with our traps

the great desire of our hearts—abundance of fur.—Having partaken of our morning meal, we took our rifles and started for the traps, and were not a little gratified to find, on our arrival, that we had secured three beavers and two otters. Every trap contained a prize except one, and it had been sprung, but from some cause (although the bait was gone) it had failed to secure its game. Having re-set our traps, we started in pursuit of the antelope that I had killed yesterday, and finding it secure from harm, took it and our fur, and returned to camp—gratified with our day's work.

The great problem with us was now fully established, that we were in the midst of fur; and the probability was, that it existed in large quantities, and had never yet been disturbed by the Hudson's Bay or any other Company. We felt greatly the need of more traps—having but six, which we had brought from Vancouver. This difficulty, however, was soon remedied. Thornton being something of a mechanic, in the course of a few days he constructed, of wood, ten more—which, although not as good as metal, answered a very good purpose in the taking of some animals. We had now sixteen traps, six of which were metal, and ten of wood; and as our necessities might require, we could increase them to any number desired.

CHAPTER II.

THERE is, perhaps, no legitimate pursuit that is followed by man, that is more trying upon the constitution than that of trapping. The trapper's life, besides being one of immense toil, is also one of continual exposure. It matters not what may be the state of the weather—whether wet or dry, hot or cold ; if he is faithful to his duties, he must meet it, without discrimination, or regard for his own comfort or ease. In our case, the labor was increased, from the fact that, aside from our regular business of hunting and trapping, we had also, at the same time, to provide our own means of subsistence, which of itself adds no small item to the daily task in the life of a back-woodsman. Although we generally found little difficulty in supplying ourselves with plenty of game, yet it required no little wear of the physical powers to keep up our daily supply.

For some time after we had established ourselves in our present quarters, our supplies, of whatever kind, had to be carried to camp upon our own shoulders, having neither horse, ox, jack, or mule, to relieve us in this arduous labor. And, notwithstanding the immense amount of toil to which we were subjected, we got along

pleasantly, and enjoyed this state of wild freedom and adventure. No disposition was manifested on the part of any of us to shrink from duty ; but each proceeded with alacrity and cheerfulness in the discharge of whatever seemed necessary to be done. And, indeed, notwithstanding all the toil and privations incident to a trapper's life, there is a certain kind of excitement and enchantment about it, which is not only pleasing, but actually captivating. And hence we generally find that those persons who have spent any considerable portion of their lives in this pursuit, with reluctance relinquish it, if they ever do ; and their minds often recur, with an almost longing desire, to return to it again.

In the wild roaming of the hunter, amid the freedom of the forest, mountains, hills, and valleys, there is a species of ennobling adventure and enlarged liberty, that is calculated to fill the soul with admiration for the vast and grand in nature—where the looming of the hoary mountain, the roaring of the river, the whispering of the forest, and the murmuring of the gentle rivulet, speak, in accents bold and grand, the praises of that God who commanded, and they stood fast. Cut off from all the conventionalities of civilized life, the trapper feels somewhat like Robinson Crusoe, on the island of Juan Fernandez,

“I am monarch of all I survey,
My right there is none to dispute.”

Yet, as far as our *rights* were concerned, the reader will find, before he gets through, this quotation does not apply.

Our success in trapping, thus far, had been fully equal

to our anticipations. Our traps seldom failed, once in twenty-four hours, to furnish us with an ample supply of fur; and our prospect was excellent (provided we met with no reverses) for becoming independent, as far as this world was concerned, in at most two years—the time we had determined upon, in our own mind, as the period of our sojourn in the country. Many an evening, after our day's work was done, have we talked over our prospects, and suggested to each other plans for the investment of our wealth, after our return to England.—But, although in this we exhibited unmistakable signs of vanity, yet permit me to say, that in it, there was at least one redeeming quality. We were all the sons of poor parents. An old mother and a maiden sister were all the family ties that Jack Moulton left in England. Will Thornton left a father, mother, and two sisters; and the survivors of my family were a father, brother, and a sister—the two latter being younger than myself. In our suggestions with regard to the employment of our wealth, there seemed to be a desire, on the part of each of us, to appropriate it, whether little or much, to the advantage of our respective families. At times, we gave ourselves some uneasiness as to how we should convey our fur and peltries to the coast of the Pacific, in order for shipping to London, at the expiration of our term of trapping; but, as we intended to return to the station at Vancouver in the course of a year, for such supplies as we might need, we concluded at that time to procure a number of horses, with which to pack all our treasures to the point desired.

As before stated, for our subsistence, we had now to depend altogether upon the chase. But fortunately for us, this country abounds in almost every variety of game, and its rivers in excellent fish. Deer, antelope, elk, mountain sheep, buffalo, and a great variety of smaller animals and fowls, were abundant; and, with ordinary industry and economy, we were in no danger of perishing for want of food. The fish of this country were the best I ever ate, and existed in such quantities that in a few hours we could take enough with our spears to last us several days. Of the various species of fish found in these rivers, the salmon was most numerous, and, in point of excellence, is unsurpassed. Fishing afforded not only amusement, but abundant exercise, when not otherwise engaged. Our habit was to visit our traps as early in the day as possible; re-set and bait them, make a proper disposition of our furs, and then employ our extra time in hunting, fishing, and securing our peltries. In this way, during the three months of our operations, we killed a great many deer, elk, antelopes, and a great number of bears, and several buffaloes, besides an almost innumerable number of smaller animals.

For some time after we had established ourselves in our new quarters, we were deprived of the use of salt, and were compelled to eat our meat without the savor of this luxury. But from this inconvenience we were providentially relieved, for during one of our hunting excursions in the mountains, Jack Moulton discovered a spring of unusually strong salt water. This spring occupied the centre of a basin several acres in extent, and boiled

up in a perpendicular jet of water as large as a man's thigh, and ordinarily rose to the hight of five feet above the surface of the earth; and occasionally a jet would rise to the hight of ten feet, and then subside to its regular motion. What was most remarkable about this spring was, that all the ejected water returned through the orifice from which it was expelled, between its regular jets. In fact, it seemed to be a kind of natural process of inhalation and respiration. First would be the jet, propelled by some subterranean force, and then a kind of suction, that carried back all the water, which in a few moments more was again ejected.

Many an hour have I spent watching this wonderful curiosity with astonishment. The water, although almost as cold as ice, was strongly impregnated with salt, and by means of tough wooden buckets, constructed by Thornton, we carried it a distance of four miles, to our camp, and used it in the seasoning and preservation of our meats. The mode of procuring this water was by placing our buckets near the orifice of the spring, so as to get a portion of each returning jet, and in a very few minutes our vessels would be filled. Our meat was cut in slices and deposited in layers, in a large trough, made for that purpose, upon which we poured an adequate supply of this brine, which was sufficiently strong to preserve it from taint in the warmest weather. By exposing a small quantity of this water to the action of the sun for a few days, in consequence of evaporation, crystallization would take place.

Fortune also smiled upon us in another respect. We

had by this time become very tired of the severe drudgery incident to our packing, but, as a remedy for this, we knew of no present alternative. But, to our very great surprise, upon our return to camp one evening, weary with our labor, we discovered, grazing upon a little knoll, within forty rods of our cabin, a horse. Upon making this discovery we were not a little surprised, not simply because we had seen an animal of this kind, (for, in parts of this country, like the buffalo, the horse may be seen in vast herds, as wild as deer,) but because this animal seemed perfectly gentle, and made not the least effort to avoid us. He seemed well stricken in years, and exhibited unmistakable signs of rather rough usage, at the hand of some person who was evidently no connoisseur in the treatment of this species of animal. His back was sore, one eye had been knocked out, and he was exceedingly low in flesh. Divers were our conjectures as to where he came from and who had been his master. Moulton finally gave, as his opinion, that this animal belonged to some roving tribe of Indians who might inhabit this country, and that he had somehow made his escape, or, in consequence of his reduced condition, had been turned out to die. This being the most reasonable hypothesis, we all received it as being correct. This suggestion, however, was not the most agreeable to our feelings. For although we were all somewhat acquainted with Indian manners and disposition, yet we regarded our force as rather slender to strike their minds with much terror in case of an unexpected adventure with them. Besides, we were entirely unacquainted with the

character of the aboriginal tribes of this section of country, if any it had, and therefore we felt no disposition unnecessarily to put ourselves to any trouble, either to hunt them up or scrape an acquaintance with them. We were far too good soldiers, however, to be frightened at the mere appearance of possible contingencies, and our prospects were too flattering to permit any thing to discourage us short of impossibilities. We therefore gave no encouragement to surmises of this kind, and drove them from us as a species of weakness unworthy of men in our position. Besides, should worse come to worst, we had confidence in the superior resources which we supposed we could bring to bear upon the savages and in our favor. But the reader will see, from the sequel of this work, how futile were all our hopes and calculations. The old horse, (which we subsequently named Killdeer,) we concluded to keep, as a prize of rare value to us. Accordingly, we took charge of him, and supplied all of his wants with the best of attention. We soon found him a very important member of our family, and beloved and respected by all. He proved of very great service to us, in bearing heavy burdens, which, so far as we could understand, was cheerfully performed.

About this time, on visiting our traps, one of them was missing. The stake to which it had been attached, by means of a chain, had been drawn from the ground. On making farther examination, we discovered the tracks of a huge bear, and at once the mystery of the missing trap was solved. The bear had inadvertently

placed his foot in the trap, which he presently discovered become a fixture thereto, and, by way of gratifying his sullen revenge, he concluded to take it with him, as an object of *serious* contemplation in his place of retirement. We at once concluded that whatever the bear might think of the adventure, we could by no means spare the trap, and having discovered his trail, we set out in pursuit of him ; and, owing to the marks left upon the ground by the trap, we had but little difficulty in following him. We examined our rifles, to see they were in good order, and at the same time so adjusted our knives that we could grasp them at once in case of necessity. We placed Killdeer in charge of Will Thornton, with the request that he should bring up the rear. In this order, we continued the pursuit over hills, valleys, and mountains, for about five miles, when we came upon a cluster of thick undergrowth of small shrubs and vines, into which the trail seemed to lead. We stationed Thornton and Killdeer on the outside, whilst Moulton and myself determined to penetrate the thicket, being satisfied that the object of our pursuit would be found there, reposing himself as comfortably as possible for one in his particular situation. We determined to keep near together, so that in case of danger to either, assistance could be had from the other. With great caution we entered the thicket, prepared for any emergency that might be presented. Having penetrated to perhaps the distance of thirty yards, we heard a hoarse, suppressed growl, at some distance on our left. Moving a few paces in that di-

rection, we were enabled to see our enemy. He was a grizzly, of formidable size, and most terrific appearance, and to persons unaccustomed with adventures of this kind, he would have been an object too formidable for attack. But with us the prize was too great to think of a retreat, when so much depended upon the issue. He was sitting upon his haunches, about thirty steps from us, holding up the foot to which the trap was attached—the very picture of distress, rendered terrible by anger. At intervals he would dash the trap upon the ground with great force, and then, as though the pain was too great for endurance, he would again hold it up, as if he were reflecting what to do next. Every time he struck the trap upon the ground he growled most hideously. We watched his movements for some fifteen minutes, when we concluded it was time to bring matters to a crisis. The bear was as yet in total ignorance of our presence, being so entirely absorbed with his own troubles, that he paid little heed to aught that occurred around him. We both fired at once, Moulton aiming for his head, and I for the region of the heart. Upon the report of our rifles, he made a tremendous lunge forward, at the same time emitting a most startling snort, and made directly for the point where we were standing. It was now painfully evident that our balls had not proved fatal; and, as the contest now stood, we concluded to beat a retreat, and accordingly made our way out of the thicket in double quick time, reaching the open space only a few rods in advance of the enraged beast. Our intention was, on gaining the

open ground, in case the bear continued the pursuit, to give him a most cordial reception at the point of our knives. But fate had decreed otherwise; for, just at the time, and at the point where we emerged from the thicket, we met Thornton, astride of Killdeer; having heard the report of our rifles, he was anxious to know the result of the contest, and was in the act of making a kind of circuitous reconnoissance. His curiosity, however, was *more* than gratified by the result. Upon discovering Thornton in his critical position, Moulton directed him to hand him his rifle, and then to make the best time possible in order to make his escape; which injunction he immediately obeyed, and, putting Killdeer to his utmost speed, (which at best was not great,) struck off at a right angle across the plain. It so happened that the bear emerged from the thicket immediately opposite the point that was occupied by Thornton, and, without turning to the right or left, continued the pursuit in the wake of Killdeer and of his rider, leaving Moulton and myself a few paces to the left. Thornton, on looking back and seeing the danger to which he was exposed, spared no effort to keep Killdeer up to the top of his speed; not only the whip, but his heels were most vigorously applied, in order to convince the poor brute that time was precious and the danger imminent. But Killdeer (like some of Adam's posterity) had lived long enough to know that the world was not to be taken by storm, and consequently refused to exert himself to any remarkable extent. The scene was exceedingly ludicrous! Some forty

yards in advance was Thornton and Killdeer, the former having lost his hat in his desire to escape from the enemy, and using extraordinary efforts to urge the latter forward, whilst the horse seemed in no way disposed to exert himself beyond a certain point habitual with him, and the bear, incommoded as he was by the trap, and evidently seriously injured by the two shots he had received in the thicket, continuing the pursuit, at a pace by no means rapid ! Both Moulton and myself laughed heartily at the picture, in spite of the seriousness of its real character. Deeming it prudent, however, to form a third party in the drama, we set off at a rapid rate in the wake of the bear, determined, whatever the result might be, to participate in its parts. It soon became evident, however, that neither Thornton nor Killdeer was in immediate danger, for the bear's speed was evidently declining, and before he had gone three hundred yards he gave up the chase altogether, and sought the shelter of a shady copse. When we came up with him, he showed but little inclination to renew the contest, and it was evident that, in consequence of the profuse loss of blood, his life was fast passing away. And in the next hour he expired, without any additional effort on our part. Moulton's ball had penetrated his head a little below the ear, and my own had grazed his heart. And yet, such is the tenacity of life in this animal, that, although either of these shots would have proved fatal to almost any other animal, with him for a time they only served to kindle his terrible wrath. Thornton having discovered, finally, that he was in no great danger, and



THORNTON AND KILLDEER PURSUED BY A GRIZZLY.

REICH-RICHE'S.



that the bear had given up the chase entirely, reined up his courser, and, ultimately, ventured back and joined us around the fallen foe. Jack and I passed a great many jests at Will's expense when he came up, and represented to him the novelty of the picture that he and Killdeer made in escaping from the bear. Will took our jests in good part, and said that he saw two other persons, in coming from the thicket, who formed quite as ridiculous a group as he and Killdeer did, he had no doubt. This bear, as he lay upon the ground before us, was a sight that would have attracted attention any where. He measured, in length, nine feet and eight inches ; and his foreleg, at the wrist, measured in circumference thirteen inches. He was the very picture of great vitality and strength, and, we all supposed, if put upon the scales, would weigh at least one thousand pounds. We soon stripped from the carcass its hide, and, having lashed it upon the back of Killdeer, set off for camp.

We had now occupied our new quarters for nearly three months, and had met with no obstacle in the least calculated to discourage us. Upon the contrary, fortune seemed to smile upon us in a remarkable manner, our success in hunting and trapping had been prosperous beyond our most sanguine anticipations, and, had no untoward events occurred, we were certainly in a fair way to become, in a comparatively brief period, pecuniarily independent.

But, alas ! for the bright hopes of mortality ! All our sanguine anticipations were on the eve of being for-

ever blasted; and we ourselves were soon to fall a prey to savage brutality!

We had already secured fur and peltries sufficient to realize in the London market several thousand dollars, and instead of any diminution in our success, the reverse was the fact. We had, within the last few days, moved a part of our traps from the tributary to the Missouri river, and the change had thus far been crowned with unprecedented success. Our hopes were high and our spirits buoyant. Up to this time, since our arrival in this country, our health had been perfect, none of us having been sick an hour.

The country we regarded as exceedingly healthy, and found it, as far as our observation went, exceedingly pleasant. Diversified with hills, mountains and valleys, at once bold, romantic and beautiful, causing the heart to swell almost instinctively with thoughts of adoration toward that Being who thus spreads before the beholder scenes that, in their wild and primitive grandeur, so far surpass the magnificence of kings, and all the progress of civilization.

The rivers and the lesser streams of water are clear, and run off with a rapid current; thus effectually draining the country. The valleys are rich, and appear extremely productive. The sides of the mountains, as a general feature, are thickly studded with large and vigorous timber.

On the afternoon of the third day of October, whilst engaged in a hunting excursion on one of the small branches of the Missouri, we recognized in the sand the

tracks of several human feet, of apparently recent date. The tracks were those of full-grown men of large size, bare-footed, and appeared to be going in the direction of our camp.

It was now evident that there were other inhabitants (or, at least, sojourners,) in this country, besides ourselves; and it required no great stretch of the imagination to arrive at the conclusion that they were Indians, and perhaps of a very hostile character.

Our equanimity was somewhat disturbed in consequence of this discovery, and we thought it at least prudent to keep an eye open for this new species of game, which we now thought it possible we might, ere long, have to contend with.

After our day's work was completed, we returned to camp, as usual, and found every thing in its proper place, and apparently secure.

At our usual time we retired to rest, and were soon asleep. Our sleep was sound and undisturbed until about the time day began to dawn, at which time our ears were saluted by a perfect din of hooting, howling, and shouting, resembling, more than any thing else, the imaginative discords of the infernal regions.

We had no difficulty at all in understanding correctly the true nature of the case. We were evidently surrounded by a band of savages, and, from present appearances, the chances were against us. I peeped through a crack and took a hasty survey of our visitors, whose appearance to *me* was horrid in the extreme. They were nearly naked, and painted in the most fan-

tastic style—dancing, yelling, and throwing their bodies in all kinds of contortions. I withdrew from the sight, sick at heart.

But something must be done; for it was evident, from their manner and the display of their weapons, that they were bent on mischief, and the probability was that they would be satisfied with nothing short of our lives. Will Thornton and myself were in favor of using our rifles for their benefit, which we could have done with fatal effect through some of the crevices of our lodge. But Moulton would not consent to it, as he thought it would only have the effect to enrage the savages, and thereby increase our peril. For, although we might dispose of a few in this way, it was not possible that, by the use of three rifles, we could resist the vengeance of at least fifty enraged savages.

Moulton's plan was to give them a friendly reception, make them some presents, and show no signs of fear whatever. Although I doubted the success of this plan upon the savages with whom we had to deal, yet, as Moulton was older and had more experience in Indian intercourse than either Thornton or myself, we yielded the point; which yielding I have regretted, times without number, since.

We accordingly threw open our door, and, with some venison and trinkets in our hands, boldly advanced toward them in the attitude of friendship. As soon as these demonstrations were made on our part, a profound silence ensued amongst the dusky barbarians of the forest. They crowded around us, but not a word was

uttered by one of them. They regarded us with apparent amazement for about ten minutes, when a dark figure, of gigantic size, with bow and arrow in hand, approached us in front and accepted our trinkets. After thoroughly examining them, he made such a distribution of them as seemed satisfactory to himself and them; after which he distributed the venison in the same way, which soon disappeared with something like the relish one would expect to find among cannibals, whose appetites had been on parole for a month.

We made use of every device in our power to convince them that we were disposed to friendship; but they seemed either not to understand us or not to heed us; and although they as yet showed no disposition to maltreat us, yet there was an ominous scowl upon their features, which made my blood curdle back upon my heart.

In this way they loitered about our camp until about one o'clock, when the same powerful savage who had accepted our presents deliberately advanced to the entrance of our lodge, and was in the act of entering, when Moulton motioned him to desist. Without a word, or dissatisfied gesture, on his part, he returned to the spot where the others were sitting; and, after a few moments' silence, every Indian sprang to his feet, making the solitude ring with their hideous yells.

Now commenced a scene beyond my powers of description. They simultaneously made a rush for the door of our lodge, and in their haste to enter pulled the door from its hinges, and having gained admittance, they

seized Moulton, Thornton, and myself, and dragged us from the lodge; and placing us under the guard of ten other savages, again returned to the cabin, preceded by the large Indian who had first made the attempt to enter. (This Indian I subsequently learned was the chief of the tribe.)

They then sacked and appropriated to their own use not only the furs and peltries, but every thing else they could lay their hands upon. Our stock of meat, axes, and rifles all shared the same fate.

Having thus completed this part of the business, they returned to the place where we were held as prisoners; and here the chief distributed the booty, retaining for his own use that which he considered most valuable.

We had hoped, after thus plundering us, the savages would at least leave us to enjoy all the comfort to be found in our destitution. But in this we were doomed to sad disappointment; for no sooner had the distribution been completed, than, in obedience to what we supposed to be a command from the chief, four Indians set about stripping the clothes off of us. To this indignity we made some resistance—which, however, did but little good, for we were dashed upon the ground, and our clothes literally torn from us, and appropriated to the use of the chief.

In this condition, entirely naked, without even shoes or hats, the party set off in a southerly direction, two Indians guarding each one of us, and at times making use of harsh means to urge us along.

I must not forget to mention that Killdeer was no ex-

ception to the general devastation that took place at our camp. One of the savages, with the utmost coolness and nonchalance, loosed him from his fastening, and mounting upon his back, accompanied us.

Our three rifles and our hunting-knives were entrusted by the chief to the care of an Indian, who appeared about sixty years old, and from the manner in which he handled the guns, we readily concluded that he was ignorant of the purpose for which they were used. Neither Moulton's or Thornton's were loaded, however, as they had cleaned them on the previous evening, and carelessly neglected to charge them.

Where we were going, or what would be the result of this disastrous incident in our history, of course we could only conjecture. But that this adventure would be one of peace and pleasure, we had not the most remote idea. As matters now stood, we supposed, if we were not devoured by the mosquitoes, the probability was that we should perish with cold and exposure. But as there seemed to be no present help for our unfortunate condition, we concluded to make the best of it, and bear it with becoming fortitude.

CHAPTER III.

MAN is, in a great degree, a creature of circumstances. And perhaps it is well that he is so, for otherwise, in many instances, life would be almost unendurable. The true philosophy of human life upon this subject is, to graduate our feelings and desires as entirely as possible to the actual condition of surrounding circumstances, (always keeping on the side of virtue, truth, and duty,) and the greater the facility with which this is accomplished, the happier we are likely to become. For it is wicked folly in man to contend against the dealings of Providence, or complain at the ways of the great All-Father, because we cannot understand them. In our present unenviable condition, we felt resigned to bear every indignity that our captors thought proper to heap upon us, with Christian fortitude ; yet intending to avail ourselves of such means of escape (as we hoped) Providence might place within our power. As yet, we were entirely ignorant of the peculiar characteristics of the savages into whose hands we had fallen ; but that they were barbarians, and of a vicious character, we had much evidence, sufficient at least to believe.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon, when we

left our camp with our Indian captors ; and having traveled, as we supposed, about fifteen miles, we called a halt, and camped for the night. The order of the march was as follows : My companions and I were placed in front, each of us guarded on either side by an Indian, and the rear was then brought up by the remainder of the savages. During the march there was but little said, but we were urged forward at a greater speed than had been habitual with us, and we suffered no small amount of pain, from the tenderness of our feet, in passing over stones, brush, and almost everything else. And, as the nights were now getting quite cold, we shivered for the want of clothing. Having struck a fire by means of flints, my two companions and myself were securely bound to stakes, by means of willow cords, about ten feet from the fire. Our positions, as regarded each other, were about five feet apart ; our arms were bound together around the wrists, behind our backs ; and then a strong cord was passed around our legs and the post, and firmly fastened, so that it was difficult for us to occupy any other position than that of standing, or squatting down upon our haunches. The cords, made of willow shoots, platted together, were hard and unyielding, and were so tightly drawn around our arms and legs, as to give us indescribable pain ; which, added to our suffering from the coldness of the night, rendered our condition truly pitiable. The Indians sat by the fire, by turns, and guarded us all night, with the closest vigilance, for, on the least noise made by one of us in changing our position, their attention would be immediately directed to us.

Our singular condition, and the misery we were enduring, was sufficient to drive all thoughts of sleep from us. The only consolation that we had left us was, that we could talk to each other without being understood by our captors. This they permitted without any apparent suspicion, although our language seemed to strike their ears as something very ludicrous, as they would talk, gesticulate, and sometimes laugh outright, upon hearing our conversation. Finding there was no means of escape on the present occasion, owing to the vigilance of our guard, various plans were suggested for future attempts, none of which, however, were carried out by us. Prior to securing us to our stakes for the night, the Indians offered us some uncooked flesh to eat, but our appetites were not yet sufficiently sharp to adopt this mode of satisfying hunger. Our captors, however, with the zest of hungry bears, devoured it in this raw state, without a particle of salt, or anything else, to modify its freshness.

Such was the pain we suffered and the misery we endured, that we eagerly longed for the appearance of daylight again, that our sufferings might be mitigated, if but for an hour. Indeed, this night seemed almost a life-time to us. At length, daylight began to appear in the east, and the sleeping savages were aroused by their nodding companions, who were still trying to keep guard. For some time after they were awakened, the Indians loitered listlessly about the camp. About sunrise, the chief, accompanied by four others, approached us and loosed us from the stakes; at the same time re-

moving the cords from our arms. Our limbs were very much swollen and inflamed where the cords had bound them, and for a time we thought we could not walk at all; but by a little exercise we felt better, although very much crippled.

We were again placed under charge of the same six Indians who had conducted us from the first; and after again offering us an uncooked breakfast, which was not only offensive to our sight, but was equally disgusting to our olfactory organs, they proceeded to satisfy their own appetites, by eagerly devouring the filthy mass like starving wolves, and then set about preparing for their march. During this interval, we seated ourselves upon a log, glad to enjoy a moment of rest, as we had obtained neither rest or sleep during the past night. We were very weak, also, from exhaustion consequent on a want of food, but saw no help for the many ills with which we were surrounded. We had but little time, however, to give to gloomy forebodings on our helpless condition, for soon the word was given, and we were marched off in the same order followed on the first day. We found it exceedingly difficult to move with sufficient speed to satisfy the humor of our captors; and in order to urge us forward at a more rapid rate, we were from time to time pricked in the back with a kind of spear, pointed with bone, and tapering to a point. By means of these instruments of torture, in the hands of the fiends who drove us, before night the blood was trickling from our backs to our heels. And what rendered our condition still worse, they made no halt at

noon, but urged us forward without a moment of rest from the time of starting in the morning until the evening twilight.

From this statement of facts, the reader may have some faint idea of the suffering we had thus far endured. But it is beyond the range of possibility to realize (without some similar experience) any thing like an adequate idea of our misery during this and the following day. Our feet were raw and bleeding—our backs were literally perforated by the point of the spears, so that they were covered with blood ; thus forming a complete point of attraction for the mosquitoes, (which still hovered around us during the warm part of the day.) We had eaten nothing for thirty-six hours, nor had our inhuman captors, during our march, permitted us to slake our thirst at the running brook, as we passed along. Our camp was formed, on this occasion, near a stream that empties into the Missouri, amidst what would (under other circumstances) have seemed a beautiful grove of timber.

After halting for the night, we were permitted, in company with our guard, to go to the stream and drink, and, as we were almost perishing with thirst, the reader may judge with what eagerness we plunged in and quenched this almost intolerable craving, regardless of consequences. A fire was kindled by the savages, and we were again offered meat, not only raw, but otherwise offensive, and to our appetites, forbidding. By signs, we asked permission to broil it over the fire ; but to this reasonable request they signified their dissent. We

then requested them to broil it for us, but this they also refused to do. Seeing starvation staring us in the face unless we ate something, I took a piece, and begged Jack and Will to sup with me; but, on putting it to our mouths, our stomachs rebelled, and refused to receive the unsavory morsel. Starvation, although a horrid death, was preferable (in our opinion) to such a mode of existence. Indeed, such was our miserable situation, that we were in no condition to eat food, even of a much more tempting kind. We were exhausted to the last degree; and unless a kind Providence, by some extraordinary means, interfered in our behalf, we saw nothing before us but death, in its most repulsive form.—For, leaving violence at the hands of the Indians out of the question, we had no idea that our constitutions would bear up under the fatigues of another such day and night as we had just passed. Stakes were driven into the ground, and we were attached to them in the same manner that we were on the night previous. We implored them, as best we could, by signs, not to bind us so tightly as they had done; but this only excited their brutal mirth, and they drew the cords quite as tightly as before.

I shall not attempt to describe the agonizing pain we endured during the long hours of this night. Suffice it to say, that we bore all of which human nature is capable, but actual death; and, much as this is dreaded in the general way, to us it would have been a relief. For some time before the dawn of day, Moulton and I had serious misgivings as to whether Thornton could live to

see the light of another day. His constitution had never been rugged ; he was of a spare, light frame, incapable of great physical endurance—consequently, his suffering was indescribable. At times he would weep like a child, and again, at other times, he would be frantic and rave like a maniac. Moulton and myself, in the midst of our own calamities, endeavored to encourage him, but to no purpose—his reason had staggered under his hard fate, and we feared much it would never be reinstated. About an hour before daylight, he sunk away in a swoon, and pitched forward on his face and knees, in which condition he remained entirely unconscious, until he was released in the morning.

We were guarded by the same number of Indians that we were on the previous nights, who kept a vigilant eye upon us the whole of this. This watching, however, was entirely gratuitous, as we could not have made our escape, had every obstacle been removed. At length, the sun shed his rays athwart the eastern horizon, and if we hailed with gratitude the dawn of yesterday, be assured, dear reader, our humble thankfulness was not diminished this morning. But again these thoughts were speedily dissipated by those of a more gloomy character. We had every reason to expect that another day's journey lay before us, similar to the one we had just passed, and perhaps several of them, (if nature bore the load,) for as to the question of when or where we were to stop, we were in total ignorance ; as well as to what disposition the savages intended ultimately to make of us. Of one thing, however, we felt

certain, that if our poor friend was not already dead, he would not be able to follow us—in which event, we had a tolerably definite idea of his fate; and we felt that we could almost pray that he might not again revive to consciousness.

After the savages had all aroused themselves, several of them approached and released us from our places of torment. Moulton and I found it exceedingly difficult to move one foot after the other. Our legs and wrists were much worse swollen than ever before. Besides, the soreness caused by the exposure of our feet, and the pricking of our backs, was excessive. When the cords were removed from Thornton, he made no effort to get up, but continued in the same position that he had occupied for the last hour. We supposed that he was dead, but upon closer examination, we found that he breathed. Moulton then lifted him as tenderly as possible, and laid him on his back. In some fifteen or twenty minutes, he slowly revived, and sat up; but his nervous system seemed entirely paralyzed, and the light of reason extinguished. He gazed around him in a wild and excited manner, and when we endeavored to talk to him, we could get no reply from him. Moulton and I took him by the arms and endeavoured to lift him to his feet, but he seemed to have lost the use of his limbs. Whilst these efforts were being made on our part, in a vain attempt to relieve poor Will, the Indians had collected together, and kept up a constant jabber, with a fiendish laugh occasionally ringing out, as if our perplexity, and Thornton's sufferings, afforded them great amusement.

We were again supplied with meat, and by doing violence to nature, forced upon our stomachs a small quantity of the loathsome aliment. When Thornton was offered his portion, he paid no attention to it, and the Indian dropped it upon the ground before him, and then walked away. The savages having disposed of their breakfast, began to collect their effects together, preparatory to the commencement of the day's journey.

Matters now approached a crisis, as far as Thornton was concerned; for we knew he could not follow us, and we very naturally supposed that he would be either murdered, or left behind us to perish alone in the forest. In our anxiety for Thornton's fate, we partially forgot our own misfortunes. We again endeavored to talk with him, but with no better success than before. He would gaze at us in the most pitiable manner, but would not utter a word. Our guard now approached and informed us that they were ready to set off. We tried to convince them by signs that Will was sick and unable to travel, and that a day's rest was necessary to restore him to health. But they treated our suggestions with contemptuous jeers and savage grimaces. Although our own condition was pitiable, yet our indignation was aroused almost beyond control at the fate of our unfortunate friend, and could we have had our guns, we would at least have had the satisfaction of laying a couple of the savages dead at our feet, and perhaps ending at once the whole scene.

The same guard who had conducted him heretofore, violently seized him by the arms and jerked him to his

feet, and then relinquishing their hold, let him drop to the ground. This inhuman act they repeated three or four times, greatly to their amusement. During this time the Indians had all collected to see and enjoy what they seemed to regard as rare amusement. After a few moments, the chief and all the other savages, except those who were guarding us, retired a short distance from us, and held a council; and in the course of some twenty minutes, returned. The chief gave an order to the two men who had Thornton in charge, which was no sooner uttered than they seized him by the feet, and running at the top of their speed, dragged him upon his back to the distance of thirty yards; and then, wheeling short upon their path, returned in the same way.

Whilst these inhuman events were in progress, the other savages set up a most deafening howl, dancing and throwing their bodies into almost every conceivable attitude. When they returned with him, he scarcely showed any signs of life. By this barbarous treatment, the skin was entirely torn from his back, and the blood was oozing freely. His flesh was quivering upon his limbs, which was the only evidence he gave of consciousness to external events. He seemed to be enduring the last agonies of mortality. We could render him no aid, although our sympathies were intensely aroused in his behalf. We felt greatly relieved by the reflection, that the very intensity of his suffering was shortening its duration, and were thankful that he was so near the end.

Upon looking up, we noticed several Indians collect-

ing wood and piling it upon the fire, which they continued until they had heaped together quite a pile. We at once suspected the object of this strange proceeding. After this was accomplished, the same two Indians who had hitherto attended him dragged him to the pile of wood, (which was now beginning to burn furiously,) and one of them taking him by the arms, and the other by the legs, after having first scalped him, threw him upon the pile, as though he were some wild animal. In the interval, the chief inquired of us for his arms or implements of war. We pointed him to his gun, hunting-knife, shot-bag, &c. These the chief took and threw upon the pile by his side; after which, the savages, with their bows and arrows in their hands, and all their implements of war attached to their persons, commenced a regular stampede dance around the funeral pile of poor Thornton. During this ceremony, they would dance, leap, hoot, sing, and contort their bodies into every possible attitude. The head of the chief during the same time was decked with a profusion of feathers, and upon his feet he wore a singularly wrought pair of moccasins. This barbarous ceremony was continued until the fire ignited the powder contained in Will's flask, (which the chief had placed, with his other munitions of war, upon the pile to be consumed with him,) and exploding, made a considerable report, looming up in a column of fire more than ten feet above the pile. When the explosion occurred, every Indian dropped instantly upon the ground, as though they had been shot; and after remaining in that position for a few moments,

they noiselessly raised to their feet, and, going about five rods from the fire, seated themselves upon the ground without uttering a word. They were evidently perplexed in their efforts to comprehend this phenomena; and like all other savages, being very superstitious, their fears were evidently wrought upon. The odor of the burnt powder seemed to add to their consternation. They sneezed and coughed in the most violent manner, and sometimes would seize their noses between their fingers, as though they would drive the intruder from their lungs by physical force. Their whole appearance and deportment, to persons differently situated, would have been in the last degree ludicrous.

In the midst of all this, we watched the progress of the fire with a great deal of interest, to see if Thornton would exhibit any signs of life when the flames reached him. In a few moments they were lapping up around him, and the only indications of life we could perceive was a few shrugs of the shoulders, and then all seemed over with him. His spirit had taken its flight to that "bourne whence no traveler returns."

Here we hope the reader will pardon a digression, and indulge us in a few brief remarks, as a tribute of remembrance to a lost friend.

William Thornton was only twenty-five years of age, of small stature, and, physically, rather weak and delicate. His mind was quick and penetrating; and a more noble, generous heart was never found in the breast of an Englishman. He was habitually kind and agreeable—always cheerful and light spirited—doing with

alacrity, and willingly, every thing in his power that seemed necessary to be done, to advance the happiness or comfort of friends or neighbors. Moulton and I had become very much attached to him, and his horrid sufferings and death were a source of infinite pain and sorrow to us. In his affliction, we could render him no assistance, and he was not even conscious of our sympathy. We consoled ourselves, however, with the idea that his troubles were at an end, and that he was forever free from the barbarities of these savages.

After the explosion of the powder-flask, the Indians seemed anxious to leave this mysterious place as soon as possible, as they probably supposed that so strange an occurrence boded no good. Our guard signified to us that they were ready to start, and before the mortal remains of poor Thornton were half consumed, we set off on our march. It was now about ten o'clock in the forenoon, and we were urged along at a more rapid pace than we had been on either of the previous days ; the spears were again freely used upon our backs and shoulders, with the like effect. Our feet were so sore and tender, that every step we took gave us great pain ; and yet we were compelled to keep up with the savages, who seemed to slip over logs, rocks, and brush, with the facility of deer. Another plague we were tormented by, was the mosquitoes. They followed us in swarms, and attacked us in the most relentless manner possible. Why it was that all their spite was vented on us, is more than I can say—for they appeared to give the savages no inconvenience whatever. The blood that we lost on

this day, by the spears, mosquitoes' bills and our feet, must have been considerable.

About two o'clock the Indians halted for about half an hour, on the bank of a small stream, where stood perhaps half a dozen old huts, far advanced in a state of decay.

While stopping here, two of the Indians left in advance of us. Of their purpose we were then ignorant, but which will appear in the sequel.

After the savages had passed around, peeping into the huts, as if in search of some one, they again set off. This respite, although short, was a great relief to Moulton and myself, for our prostration was extreme, and far beyond my powers of description. We continued at about the same speed as before, but not without receiving frequent probes from the spears of our guard.

About four o'clock, we reached another small stream of water, and having descended it for perhaps a mile, we saw approaching us an incongruous mass of savages, fearful to contemplate. There were men, women and children; some on horseback, and some on foot; some of them were entirely naked, and some of them having around their middle simply a piece of the hide of some animal—filthy in the extreme. They approached us in all kinds of order and disorder, and made the woods resound with their screeches and screams. Had all the wild beasts of the forest been thrown together *pell mell* in a heap, the sound and confusion could not have been more discordant and frightful, than was that which now

greeted us. They crowded around us, on every side, as if they meant instantly to devour us. Our guard halted and gave them time to gratify their curiosity. They came up and felt, pinched, and kicked us in the most wanton and brutal manner. In this sport the women showed no more delicacy than the men.

After the savage troop had to some considerable extent gratified their inquisitive dispositions, our guard ordered them back, and we were marched on, as before. We were greatly annoyed; however, by these wild and ferocious beings, until we reached the village, about sunset.

We now understood the object of the two men who left us a few miles back. In compliance with a custom of these wild people, when they have taken captives, they had gone before as runners, to apprise the savage villagers of our approach, and accordingly they had all come out to meet us.

We soon approached the village, which, to us, was fantastic in the extreme. For, although Moulton and I both had seen Indian villages before, yet this differed from any that we had seen heretofore. Mud, grass, and branches of trees, entered largely into its composition. Some of the huts were conical, with an aperture in the centre for the egress of the smoke, whilst others were oblong, without any roof; others, again, were square, and covered with the branches of trees—all were small, gloomy, excessively filthy, and without floors.

These hovels numbered, as I subsequently learned,

about fifty, and were the very pictures of poverty and wretchedness. We were conducted to a tent which occupied about a central position in the village, which was used as a council-house and prison, and was now unoccupied. Here we were placed, and closely guarded day and night. Whilst occupying this place of confinement, our legs were closely bound together with cords, to prevent the possibility of escape. Our food consisted of the same filthy meat as before, of which we must eat or starve. We managed to force a little of it on our stomachs daily, and by degrees it became less offensive to us.

Such had been our exposure and brutal treatment, since we had fallen into the hands of the savages, that life itself had become a burden; and but for that ray of hope which follows man in the darkest hour of his affliction, and bids him look for better things, we should have welcomed Death as a messenger of peace!

For more than a week after our arrival in this place, we were scarcely able to move, in consequence of the mutilation of our backs; legs and feet, which were rendered still more tormenting by our exceedingly uncomfortable lodgings—the bare ground being our only couch, and, although the nights were chilly, we had nothing, not even the skin of a beast, to cover our naked bodies.

CHAPTER IV.

AS YET we had received no intimation from our captors, as to what disposition they designed to make of us, although we had frequently endeavored to elicit something from them on this subject. From their more than barbarous conduct, not only toward ourselves thus far, but in the outrageous murder of our companion, we could gather but faint hope of any thing but cruelty, and probably ultimate death, at their hands. Unless we could by some means make good our escape, (and from the vigilance with which they guarded us, there seemed slight prospect of success in that direction,) there seemed to be no remedy for us. We tried to resign our future, whatever it might be, into the hands of Providence, believing that if it was in accordance with his will that we should elude the vigilance of these savages, the way of escape would be made plain, and we should be prospered therein. But, upon the contrary, if it was his will that, like our noble companion, we should fall a prey to savage vengeance, far away from home and friends, in the wilderness, where even a hint from the dim record of our fate would be forever lost to our friends, we endeavored to be content. Yet to say that we were at ease, with all the strivings for resignation, or the philosophizings that we could master, would

be a misnomer; for in fact, both physically and mentally, we were most wretched. A dread of worse calamities than those through which we had passed constantly tormented us, and disturbed our rest, day and night! The apparent calm which we were now enjoying seemed ominous, and our minds recurred, in anticipation, to a speedy realization of some great calamity.

During our confinement in the village, our fears had been excited and our minds daily harrassed, by the collection about our hut of large bodies of savages, of both sexes and every age and condition. Their naked and brutal appearance was loathsome and repulsive, from which we turned with almost involuntary shuddering.

The mass of these people, in a moral point of view, seemed but little elevated above the brute creation, and their knowledge rather instinct than reason. And, to persons unacquainted with humanity in this degraded form, the exceeding depravity of these people would seem almost to startle credulity itself; although I subsequently found there were exceptions to this rule, and believe some of them susceptible of improvement.

We had been confined in this place for ten days; and although far from being restored to our wonted vigor, yet our condition was much improved from that which it had been on our arrival. The contusions on our backs and limbs were partially healed, and our strength considerably improved, since we were placed in the hut; the cords with which our legs were bound together, had not been so tightly drawn, and conse-

quently the pain we experienced from this cause was considerably ameliorated.

We still loathed the kind and quality of the food with which we were supplied; but, making a virtue of necessity, we tried to satisfy the cravings of appetite with it as best we could.

As yet, we had found no opportunity for escape. Had the constant vigilance of our guard been relaxed but for a brief period, we might have managed to have eluded them, for we could have removed the cords from our limbs without much effort, and we would have had little difficulty in kicking a hole through the side of the hovel large enough for our escape. But this joint escape was never to be accomplished. On the morning of the fifteenth day of our captivity, the whole village collected together, in the vicinity of our place of imprisonment, and rent the air with their hideous noise and uproar. They all—old and young, male and female—seemed exceedingly jubilant from some cause. In the midst of this, the chief made his appearance at this council-hall and prison, and having addressed himself to our guard, they immediately removed the cords from our limbs, and conducted us outside of the hut. At this the whole concourse of savages renewed their shrieks, yells, and gyrations

Our guard immediately started with us, in a westerly direction; and the whole company followed. Some were on horseback, but far the largest number were on foot, and the march commenced amid the howling and barking of any number of cadaverous-looking dogs.—

Had all the fiends in Pandemonium been driven together by some tremendous convulsion of the infernal regions, we thought the noise and confusion could not have been more terrific or revolting to civilized feelings.

We pursued our course at a rapid pace, over hills and valleys, for, as we supposed, about ten miles, when we were again met by hundreds of savages, in the same promiscuous manner as on our first arrival among them. Here we were again stopped as before, and submitted to the same indignities by this new recruit of savages. After sating their curiosity, and exhausting their ingenuity, we were moved forward again amid their hooting, jeers, and grimaces. Having gone a mile, perhaps, farther, and ascended to a beautiful grove of timber, upon a slight elevation, we came in view of what seemed a temporary Indian encampment. There were but few tents; and they appeared to be of recent construction, and of very fragile nature, being composed entirely of the boughs of trees.

Into one of these tents we were conducted and bound as before, having also the same guard to watch over us. We felt that our present condition was certainly an improvement on what it had been at the village, in one particular at least—every thing was fresh and clean.

The afternoon was now pretty well advanced, and the grove appeared alive with the forms of dusky savages. Dancing and whooping seemed their favorite amusement on this occasion. Fresh troops of savages were almost constantly arriving during the afternoon and night; and we were annoyed and vexed at the frequency

with which we were taken out and exhibited (as though we were some strange species of animal) to these new comers. At an early hour in the evening, numerous camp-fires were blazing; and uproar and confusion seemed to be the order of things during the whole night. It would be in vain to attempt to give the reader anything like a correct idea of the wild, unearthly discord which characterized the proceedings of the savages during this and the following night. Neither Moulton or I slept for a single moment—we could only listen to the infernal noise that reigned without. Our feelings were such, however, that, had there been no external cause of disturbance, it is doubtful whether our rest would have been composed, or our slumbers unbroken. We had serious misgivings as to what this new order of affairs meant, and what the result would be, with regard to our own interests and welfare.

At an early hour next morning, we inquired (by signs) of our guard the object of these proceedings; and, for the first time since our captivity, received from them an answer to our question. They signified to us that the Black-Foot nation had met together in council, to determine upon what was best to be done with us. This information, as the reader may well suppose, was not calculated to allay our agitation, or quiet our fears, as we knew we had little mercy to expect at the hands of a people so degraded, base, and cruel, as we had found them.

The sky was clear this morning, and the sun shone peculiarly bright and beautiful. The noise, song, dance, and

scalp halloo had ceased suddenly, about day dawn, and we were left to our reflections. About 10 o'clock in the morning, we were conducted by our guard before the council. The chiefs and warriors, and those admitted to the deliberations of the council, occupied an open space in the centre of the camp, in the form of a circle, and were all seated on the ground in perfect silence.— We were conducted and seated upon the ground in the centre of the ring.

We observed that during the progress of the deliberations, the women and children occupied another part of the camp, at some distance from the council, and were profoundly quiet.

All the Indians participating in the deliberations of the council were painted, and wore the dress and carried the implements of war. Their appearance was savage in the extreme, and illy calculated to re-assure us, or raise our drooping spirits. The whole assemblage remained perfectly silent for about ten minutes after we had taken our seats in the midst of them. At a signal from the chiefs, they all in an instant sprang to their feet, and, preceded by the chiefs, commenced one of their war-dances, moving around us in a circle. During the progress of this ceremony, they hummed over a kind of strange, unearthly music, which I could compare to nothing I had ever heard ; and at regular intervals they would stop, and whoop and screech most furiously, and then continue their progress as before. Their bodies, in the mean time, were thrown into every variety of contortion, and their features (always repulsive) were made

to assume a hideousness which would have done honor to Beelzebub himself. They finally brought this part of the ceremony to a close, and having resumed their seats, one of the chiefs arose, and commenced what we supposed to be a speech. To us, his language was like a sealed book, as we understood not a word of it. That the subject matter of the speech intimately concerned us, we readily concluded, as, during his address, the chief frequently pointed in a very significant way towards the place where we were sitting. Judging from the countenances of his auditors, his arguments were having an effect upon them, by no means flattering to our prospects. During the delivery of the speech, their eyes were fixed upon us in a most ferocious manner; exhibiting, in a remarkable degree, the emotions of anger, hatred, and contempt, and a desire for a speedy and terrible vengeance.

This speech occupied about ten minutes in its delivery, and, at the conclusion, every Indian sprang to his feet as quick as thought, and made the woods resound with a succession of quick, nervous shrieks, and again took their seats—when, after a short interval, another chief rose up, and proceeded to address the council—when the same savage demonstration (apparently of approbation) followed. This order was continued until four speeches were made—the same attention being given, and the same ceremony observed at the close. At the conclusion of the last speech, the savages quietly withdrew, and the council broke up without any farther ceremony, or any intimation that we could understand, of the re-

sults of their deliberations. We were now left to the care of our guard, who conducted us back to our tent, and bound us as before. From the demeanor of the savages constituting the council, we were fearful of their verdict ; for, although we could not understand their language, and had no intimation from them what the result was likely to be, yet we thought we could detect, in their manners and conduct, vengeful intentions.

After being taken back to our tent, we inquired of our guard what the result of the council was ; but could get no definite answer from them. This tended, also, to increase our agitation. It was about three o'clock in the afternoon when the council broke up, and we were immediately afterward served with our morsel of disgusting food. Quiet appeared to reign throughout the camp until dusk, when the camp fires were again lighted, and all the noise and confusion of the past night was renewed, and kept up during the whole of this. In the mean time, we had determined on making our escape during this night, if possible, as we had much reason to suppose that the savages meant to put us to death, and that, probably, by means of some terrible torture. So that, should we even fail, the failure would not probably make our case any worse.

On this night, three other Indians took the place of those who had heretofore guarded us. We laid down at an early hour in the evening, and feigned to be sound asleep ; yet, such was our anxiety as to the success of what we were about to undertake, that our blood was fired up in an extraordinary manner ; and the motion of

our hearts was quick and spasmodic. Our savage guard was engaged in conversation until after midnight, and had, up to that time, given no indication of drowsiness. But, having spent the previous night in carousal, their watchfulness began to relax before the urgent demand for sleep ; and presently we noticed one of them drop over on his side, apparently asleep, and, in the course of ten minutes more, one of the others followed his example ; and before the expiration of half an hour, we were gratified to find all three of them asleep, and snoring lustily.

Now, by a little exertion with our hands, we soon removed the cords from our legs. We then quietly arose to our feet, and gently elevating some of the branches of which our tent was constructed, made an opening sufficiently large for our egress. But here again was a great difficulty to be overcome, or failure in our enterprise must be the consequence. The camp-fires were blazing in every direction from our tent, and shedding a bright light over the whole scene, thus making a strong probability of our being detected ; especially, as the savages were all astir, and making the night hideous with their strange noises and ditties. However, there was no time to be lost, and we slipped noiselessly through the aperture, and taking a northerly direction, commenced creeping along on our bellies, designing to pass centrally between two fires, which were perhaps fifteen rods apart. We had progressed some five or six rods from the tent, when several dogs started off at a furious rate, (in the direction that we were proceeding,) barking fearfully.

We squatted flat upon the ground, but, to our infinite mortification and terror, this did not save us. Scores of the Indians followed the dogs, and it only required a few moments for them to comprehend the whole affair. We were again seized, kicked and cuffed, and, after being taken back, amid the jeers and insults of hundreds of savages, were bound hand and foot, and thrust upon the ground. The uproar on the outside, occasioned by our re-capture, had awakened our guard from their comfortable sleep ; when, discovering that we were missing, they hastened to the scene of action, and were exceedingly officious in re-conducting us back again.

Presently one of the chiefs came into the tent, and learning what had occurred, soundly rebuked the guard for their dereliction in duty, by giving them a few hearty kicks in the posterior portion of their bodies, which made them grin in a very interesting manner.

We now gave up all for lost ; for our last hope (as far as we could see) had proved a failure, and would, perhaps, hasten the calamities which we believed were pending over our heads. Such had been the beneficial result of the chief's reproof upon our guard, that, for the remainder of the night, sleep seemed to have forsaken their eyes, as they were not only wide awake, but boisterous.

As on the preceding morning, the noise and uproar made by the savages ceased at day-light, and everything became perfectly quiet. After we had forced upon our stomachs a few morsels of our miserable apology for a breakfast, the chief appeared at the door of the

tent, and having made some communication to our guard, left us. About ten o'clock, the cords with which we were bound were taken off by our guard, who led us from the tent to a point in the camp where a large number of savages were collected, who all appeared quiet and orderly. As we approached, they gave way, and we were led into the centre of the collected multitude.

Upon taking our position, what was our horror on beholding a stake firmly driven into the ground, and a great quantity of dry faggots collected and bound together, and laid in piles. It was now evident that our worst fears were about to be realized; and that in a very short time we would probably be put to the torture, and die a most horrible death. Our feelings at this time may be imagined, but they can never be described. Although we had been for some time trying to reconcile our minds to any fate which might befall us, yet, such is the tenacity with which humanity generally clings to life, that it is exceedingly hard to relinquish it voluntarily, (unless aroused by some enthusiasm,) especially, when death is presented in its most painful and repulsive form.

The male portion of the savages, both chieftains and warriors, were painted in the most grotesque and hideous style, and armed with their spears and knives. We had occupied our position in the midst but a short time, when one of the chiefs arose, and spoke for a few minutes, in a loud, excited, and vehement manner. When he sat down, the whole company of savages sprang from their recumbent position, and commenced filing off in

the form of a circle around us, and flourishing their weapons in a threatening manner, and, at regular intervals, hooting and shouting, until the forest gave back the terrific sounds. After this ceremony had lasted some ten or fifteen minutes, the chief who had aided in our capture advanced to the centre of the circle near where we were standing, and tapped Moulton on the shoulder three or four times with the side of his spear, and then returned to his place. A second ring of savages was then formed, the space between them being about five feet. Moulton's guard then conducted him to the interim between the two circles, whilst I was left under the care of the guard in the first place assigned me. Moulton had scarcely gained the open space between the two circles, when the savages nearest to him attacked him in the most ferocious manner with their knives, spears, and clubs ; and, as he advanced around the circle in order to avoid the severe torture which he was enduring, he met the same treatment at the hands of the entire circle. In this way, he passed around the ring three times, and then, from the severity of the treatment and the loss of blood, he fell to the ground, but was immediately seized by the infuriated savages, and dragged to the stake ; to which he was securely bound, and the faggots speedily piled around him.

Whilst this was going forward, the chief signed to me for his implements of war and of the chase ; and I having pointed him to his gun and knife, they were handed over to be consumed with him.

It is a custom with these savages, and also regarded

amongst them as a principle of honor, that all the arms, or implements used in hunting or in war—whether they belong to friend or foe—shall follow the condition of their owner, be he buried away in the earth, or consumed at the stake. And, whilst suffering death at the stake, according to the custom in this nation, the prisoner's hands are fetterless, as, according to their rude notions of a future state, the free use of the hands, and the accoutrements of a chief, or hunter, are as essential to their convenience and comfort in that state as the present.

During these inhuman inflictions of cruelty, Moulton had not uttered a word, but bore his tortures with the greatest stoicism and fortitude. His head, face, and body were covered with blood when he was tied to the stake, and so profuse was the flow from his temples, that it was with difficulty he could see at all. I admonished him to bear with fortitude every thing that his tormentors inflicted upon him, and to trust, with full confidence, through grace, in the salvation of Christ, and that I should soon follow him, and that we would again be united in the better world on high.

He replied, that his tortures had been intense, but that the grace of God was sufficient to carry him through all that could be inflicted upon him, and that he was anxious for the termination of the scene as quickly as possible.

The faggots were lighted, and in a few moments Moulton was enveloped in the flames, and without uttering a word, or exhibiting the least sign of pain, his spirit passed from earth.

The savages, amid the most tempestuous uproar, confusion, and demoniacal grimaces, continued to heap on fuel until the body was entirely consumed—after which, I was again conducted to the tent, and bound as before. This was contrary to my anticipations, as I had expected the consummation of my melancholy fate would immediately follow that of Moulton, but it was not to be.

It was now about two o'clock in the afternoon, and having witnessed a scene the like of which I pray God I may never again be constrained to look upon, I felt very much exhausted and sick at heart, and had relinquished all desire to live, and felt resigned to meet my fate, and desired the end would soon come.

My attachment to Moulton had been very strong. He was a faithful friend, liberal to a fault, and possessed of a large and noble soul. He was rather of a religious turn of mind, having been reared by religious parents—although he had never made any public profession. He had a good constitution, was strong, active and robust, always calm and self-possessed, being a stranger to fear of every kind. And although his end was melancholy in the extreme, yet his fortitude never forsook him. His life had been one of honest industry, in a commendable calling, and he died in the full possession of the inspiring hope of the true believer.

Having slept none for several nights, and feeling wearied both in mind and body, after my return to the tent I soon fell asleep, and slept until some time after dark. When I awoke, I noticed a number of camp-fires burning, but, from some cause, the Indians were

quiet. Perhaps, in consequence of their loss of sleep the two preceding nights, they gave themselves up to repose on this. I slept but little from the time I awoke until daylight. My guard, during the night, were vigilant, not suffering their eye-lids to droop for a moment, but keeping a constant watch on every motion I made.

About eight o'clock in the morning I was unbound, and taken perhaps a mile south of the camp, where we again came upon the whole band of Indians. They were assembled in the midst of a grove of timber, in the same manner that they were on yesterday morning. Why they had changed their location, I could not conjecture, but subsequently learned it was on account of the scarcity of water at the old camp. I was immediately conducted into their midst, where the fatal stake and faggots were already prepared, and after going through the same barbarous ceremonies as on the former occasion, (with the exception of not compelling me to run the gauntlet around the circle,) I was firmly fastened to the stake, by means of cords of hide passed around my body and legs, and the faggots piled around me. The same chief then brought me my rifle and my hunting-knife, and, at my request, my powder-horn. These savages seemed to have no idea of the dangerous uses of fire-arms; for, on inspection, I found that the same load was in my gun which was there when we were captured. I reprimed it with fresh powder in their presence, without seeming to excite their suspicions. I had determined, when my arms





THE RESCUE STRATAGEM.

FELCH = PICHES.

were given me, that before the flames reached my body, I would avenge myself on the chief who was at the head of the party which captured us, by trying his power of endurance in resisting the effects of a rusty load from an English rifle.

The faggots were now fired in several places, and the savages were performing their circular gyratory dance, with the usual accompaniments of noise and confusion, when, on raising my eyes in a suppliant attitude toward Heaven, almost the first object that I distinctly comprehended was a very large panther, laying on the limb of a tree, almost directly above us. The idea immediately occurred to me that this was Providential, and designed as a means for my deliverance. Knowing the superstition of these wild people, the thought flashed upon me that if I could bring the panther down (with my rifle) in their midst, they would attribute the report and smoke of the gun, and the simultaneous fall of the animal, to supernatural agency, and the result might possibly be my deliverance from the tortures of the stake. My greatest fears resulted from the uncertainty that might attend the attempt to discharge my rifle, in consequence of the load having been so long deposited. But the emergency demanded prompt action, and I threw my rifle to my shoulder, and although my nerves were somewhat unsteady, I quickly brought the beast within its range, and pulled the trigger, and at the report of the gun the panther gave one fearful shriek, leaped from the limb, and with tremendous force came crashing down amongst the savages. The report of the

gun, followed by the descent of the lifeless panther, frightened them nearly out of their senses. They instantly fled some distance from the fatal spot, and then turned around and regarded it with silent awe. By this time the flames were advancing rapidly upon me, and a few minutes more would decide my fate. At this juncture about twenty of the savages rapidly advanced to the stake, and in an instant severed the cords that bound me with their knives, and in any thing but a ceremonious manner jerked me away, and urged me forward at a rate of speed which I had never before attained. We returned to the village from whence I had been taken a few days before, but instead of being confined, as heretofore, I was taken to the chief's lodge, and provided with all the comforts that he enjoyed, and was allowed to cook my meat to my own taste.

From this time the Indians seemed to regard me as a superior being, exerting a kind of supernatural power, and instead of insult and abuse, they paid the greatest deference to my wishes, and in most cases were obedient to my commands.

My rifle was a great mystery to them, (which I was careful not to unravel,) and when they learned the certainty with which it could be used, and its deadly effect when brought to bear upon any living creature, they seemed greatly amazed and were afraid to touch it.

I was allowed my liberty, upon the condition that I would not attempt to escape; which, of course, I promised not to do, making at the same time great mental reservations, as I felt determined in my own mind to

run away at the first favorable opportunity. For, although circumstances now seemed in my favor, at least so far as my life was concerned, yet the awful calamities that I had endured at their hands, and the deep impression made upon my mind and sympathies, by the horrible murder of my two companions, Thornton and Moulton, had inspired me with a loathing detestation that I thought I should never forget.

CHAPTER V.

THE Black-Foot nation of Indians (in the Indian signification of the term) are considered brave and warlike, and are a constant terror to a number of the neighboring tribes. Toward their prisoners, taken in war or otherwise, they are cruel to the last degree—almost uniformly putting them to death, either at the stake or in some other cruel form. In their forays on other tribes, they spare neither age nor sex, but indiscriminately put all to death.

As a general rule, the males are tall, straight, and muscular, exhibiting great activity when circumstances call it forth. They are almost uniformly good horsemen, and exhibit much dexterity in the management of these animals. They are fond of the chase, and spend a good portion of their time in hunting and fishing, but, withal, are exceedingly improvident and slothful; “taking but little thought what they shall eat or drink, or wherewith they shall be clothed,” but allowing every day to take care of itself.

The females of this nation are in almost every respect inferior to the males. Their features are coarse

and forbidding, their manners rude, and their whole appearance filthy and slatternly. This may principally be accounted for by the fact that their condition, as regards the males, is that of absolute slavery. The women are made do all the drudgery, and, in many cases, they are made perform the tasks usually allotted to beasts of burden—carrying in the game, arms, and other implements for their lazy lords.

The Black-Foot nation is divided into four distinct tribes, or bands, to wit: the Bloods, the Piegans, the Gros-Ventres, and the Black-Feet proper. All these tribes are, however, generally included, when we speak of the Black-Foot nation. They have been united by consanguinity and lineage for many generations, and their national interests are a unit. In all their wars with neighboring tribes, they act together as in a common cause; and no measures of general interest are ever adopted without consultation with all the confederate tribes. Each one of these tribes or bands has its own chiefs, and is independent of each other, except in regard to the common defense, or that which concerns the whole nation. The language, manners and usages of these tribes are, with a few slight differences, the same.

The Black-Feet proper and the Bloods occupy the country upon the source of the Marias and Milk rivers, to the fiftieth parallel of latitude. The Piegans occupy the country between the Marias and Milk rivers, upon the Marias river and the Teton, and between the Teton and Missouri. The Gros-Ventres inhabit the country

bordering on Milk river, to the territory of the Pie-gans.*

The number of warriors belonging to the Black-Foot nation is about four thousand, and in their contests with the neighboring tribes, almost uniformly come off first best.

Another peculiarity belonging to these Indians in an especial sense, is their great passion for, and expertness in, horse-stealing. The neighboring tribes lose hundreds of fine horses annually by these depredators. But for this evil there is no help, as the Black-Feet are the monarchs of all that region of country, and, like other dignitaries, feel at liberty to take tithes of those who owe them homage.

We were captured by a party from the Black-Feet tribe proper, and after having been conducted to the village, as before related, messengers were posted from this to other tribes of the nation, giving them notice of our capture, and inviting their presence at the council, (and perhaps torture,) according to their custom in all cases of this kind. Every tribe of the Black-Foot nation, as I subsequently learned, was represented in the council which determined the fate of Moulton and myself. Besides the chiefs of the tribes, there were also many of the warriors present.

After the phenomenon of the panther, the savages separated, and most of them set out for their respective

* The territorial boundaries, names of rivers, and other geographical data, are taken from modern publications, in order to render the work more intelligible.—ED.

tribes, leaving me in the hands of those who had first taken me prisoner.

Up to this time, and for a considerable time after, I understood but little of their language, and consequently our conversation was principally carried on by signs. Their language is not very difficult to acquire, and at the end of six months I could both speak and understand it pretty well. Their vocabulary of words exhibits great poverty, and much of their conversation is carried on, amongst themselves, by means of signs. Their general mode of conversation is to use a sufficient number of outline words to give form to the idea that they wish to convey, and then to supply all minute deficiencies by signs and gestures, rapidly conveyed, and with great aptitude understood by them.

Since my Providential return to the village, I had used every means in my power to strengthen and secure their good opinion concerning me. I put on a cheerful countenance and visited them at their huts freely, and, externally at least, seemed careless and contented. The attachment and veneration of the Indians toward me seemed greatly increased, and in a short time I became an object of no inconsiderable influence amongst them. As is customary with all savage tribes, a revolution in sentiment from barbarous cruelty usually terminates in the other extreme of great favor and condescension.

At their solicitation, I usually accompanied them in their hunting and fishing excursions; and by the constant exhibition of my superior wisdom in these pursuits,

they regarded me as a being possessed of a kind of supernatural prowess and wisdom, who had been sent amongst them to instruct and benefit them. The ease and certainty with which I could take game with my rifle, was a source of astonishment, and was regarded by my savage observers with perplexity and awe. The report of my gun was for some time a source of terror, and gave them great uneasiness every time I discharged it, until I explained to them that the noise was not the charm, but only an evidence that the charm had passed by; which assurance, I was glad to find, entirely dispelled their fears.

Hohoako-Kiwa, or "Mountain Eagle," the chief, expressed a wish, on one occasion, to try his success upon an antelope with my rifle, which I permitted him to do, after giving him the necessary instructions. He drew up in great haste and fired; but the moment the report reached his ears, he dropped the gun and sprang back in great terror, at the same time uttering a loud pooh! So ludicrous was the scene, that I could not refrain from laughing. After Hohoako-Kiwa had sufficiently recovered his self-possession, he remarked that he had no doubt but rifle-charm was very good, but it was never made for Black-Foot Indian. Whether the ball passed within one or ten rods of the antelope, I could not tell, as it loped off with all the ease and grace imaginable.

Since my return to the village, the chief had given me permission to make for myself, from the skins of animals, such a covering for my body as my own taste might dictate. Accordingly, I made a kind of coat,

which came down to my knees, and also a pair of leggings, which, after so long exposure, I found very comfortable. The chief's wife also made for me a pair of moccasins, which were neatly and curiously wrought, and adorned with wampum in extravagant style. I found them, however, very comfortable and serviceable during the winter.

With the axes and auger that they had taken from us at our capture, I made, for some of the squaws, several useful vessels and other conveniences, such as water-buckets, troughs, &c. By these little offices of kindness, they also became very partial to me, and were always willing to do any thing in their power to minister to my comfort.

About this time it was resolved to spend two weeks hunting buffalo on the prairies, and that I should be of the party. I expressed entire satisfaction with the arrangement, and a wish to accompany them and partake of the amusement. Horses were provided for us to ride, and the chief announced that all things were ready for a start.

I had but little knowledge of the art of riding on horseback, having done but little of it during the preceding part of my life. My horse was pointed out to me, and I was assisted to mount; but no sooner had I got fairly astride the animal than it commenced kicking, rearing, and plunging, in a most furious manner, and never ceased for a moment, until, after turning about three summersaults, I landed upon my back some distance in advance of him. At this display of my horse-

manship, the Indians set up a tremendous shout of laughter. As good luck would have it, I was not much hurt, and was soon upon my feet again. The Indians caught the horse and brought him back. After this misadventure, I thought it no more than an act of prudence in me to modestly decline riding on horseback altogether. But the chief insisted that I should give the animal one more trial, as he was the most docile of any that they possessed. He said he would hold the horse until I was fairly seated, and then he would give me the necessary instructions how to ride and manage my horse. Accordingly, I again mounted, and after telling me in what position to put my legs and adjust my body, and how to use my hands and arms in guiding a horse, he let him go; and, although he seemed restive for some time, yet he moved off tolerably well. By watching the Indians, I soon acquired the secret of their horsemanship, and could stick to a horse almost as well as they could. These animals know very quickly, however, whether the person mounting them understands his business; and if he does not, terra firma is certain to receive him in an incredibly short space of time. The mode of traveling on horseback of these Indians is in single file, and at a full canter. I found it rather difficult to keep along with them, especially in passing through thick underbrush and over logs and ravines.

Our course was up the Missouri river, and in riding thirty miles we stopped but once, and that was to graze the horses. We arrived at the point for which we set

out some time before night, and having pitched our camp and partaken of our morsel of food, we prepared every thing for an early start and busy day's hunt on the morrow. Our camp was situated on the margin of a beautiful prairie, and although the tall grass and herbage were dry and sere, yet the extent and grandeur of the prospect inspired the beholder with enthusiasm and feelings of new life.

At an early hour in the morning we were astride our horses, and darting across the prairie in every direction, in search of buffalo. The Indians were armed with their bows and arrows and spears, which they use with fatal effect upon the buffalo, and, in fact, upon almost every species of game. Their arrows are hurled with such force, when under full headway in pursuit of game, that even the powerful buffalo, in a short time, is made to succumb to their deadly effect. Their spears are used in close combat, and, when wielded by the hand of a powerful Indian, do fatal execution. As for myself, I carried my rifle and hunting-knife, fully persuaded that in the chase the chances of success were in my favor.

We had not gone far before we espied an immense herd of buffalo in the distance, grazing on the prairie, and, immediately dispersing our men in the proper directions in order to surround them, we gave them chase ; and amid a cloud of dust almost impenetrable, and the bellowing of the herd, we pursued them at the top of the speed of our horses, every man in his own way. Coming up within a few rods of a fine cow, I discharged my rifle at her, but whether I hit her or not I never

knew; as, the moment my rifle cracked, my horse squatted and sent me, at an angle of about forty-five degrees, flying through space, leaving me not only with an empty gun, but also with a sprained ankle. When I had sufficient time to collect my senses, I saw my horse cantering gaily across the prairie, in an opposite direction, little regarding the mischief he had done. Some of the Indians, discovering my difficulty, came to my relief, and having pursued and caught my horse, brought him back to me. One of the Indians assisted me to mount, and then returned to camp with me, where for two days and nights I suffered intensely from my sprained ankle, but was finally relieved by the application of a kind of paste, made from a glutinous root which is common in this country.

During the two days of my confinement, the Indians had succeeded in securing three of the buffaloes, and had the beef in the process of drying. The whole of the third day I spent (with two Indian assistants) in breaking my horse to the use of my rifle. This I did by firing my gun repeatedly before him, and behind him, and over his head, until he seemed to take no notice of the report. I then got upon his back and put him in rapid motion, and whilst thus advancing, fired, until I was satisfied that he took no farther notice of the noise.

On the next day I again set off with the Indian hunters, and we had the good fortune, about ten o'clock, to fall in with a herd of buffaloes, and immediately gave them chase. I soon overtook a large bull, and, taking aim as best I could, fired for the region of his heart.

He pitched forward and fell upon his knees, but quickly recovering, made off with himself at a greatly retarded speed. I immediately reloaded my rifle, and again starting in pursuit, soon came up with him, and aiming my ball as before, fired, when the bull, turning a complete summersault, fell to the ground.

When the Indians came up, they made a great ado over my success, and congratulated me on my prospect as a successful buffalo hunter. My horse stood the firing admirably, and I felt encouraged and proud of my success.

Mine was the only buffalo secured to-day, the Indian hunters having failed in killing any. They soon made the proper disposition of the beef, and we returned to camp for the night.

In this way we spent fifteen days, and secured, during the time, ten buffaloes, four of which I killed with my rifle. The Indians informed me that this was unusual success, as they had often spent a much longer time in the chase and not secured more than one or two, and sometimes none.

Yet, amid our rejoicings at our good fortune, we encountered a source of regret, in a sad calamity which befell two of the Indians on the last day of the hunt. Three of them started out in search of the horses early in the morning, and having wandered off to some distance among the bluffs on the border of the prairie, were attacked by two enraged grizzly bears. Two of the Indians were killed and their bodies horribly mangled by them. The third Indian made his escape, and

reached the camp, half frightened out of his senses, and related what had happened.

There is no foe which inhabits these regions half so formidable to the Black-Feet as the grizzly and brown bears. Their arrows and spears have but little effect upon the vitality of these animals, and they dread them more than they do all the fiends in this world or the other. In fact, the Black-Feet have encountered but one class of enemies whom they really fear, and they are the bears. With all their prowess as a brave and warlike nation of Indians, one grizzly or brown bear, turned loose amongst them, would put the whole nation to route; and if the Crows, Snakes, or Flat-Heads were only to keep one or two of these animals in their camp when at war with the Black-Feet, they would at least be in no danger of a sudden attack from the enemy.

I immediately proposed to take my rifle and go in pursuit of the aggressors, but, to my astonishment, none of the Indians were willing to accompany me in so dangerous an enterprise.

So, making the necessary inquiry as to the whereabouts of these animals, from the frightened fugitive who had escaped from them, and seeing that my rifle was in good order and properly loaded, I set out in pursuit of them, contrary to the remonstrances of the Indians. I had not traveled over a mile, when, on ascending to the top of a bluff, I was in full view of the bears, not more than thirty yards from me, devouring the corpses of the slain Indians. I kneeled down upon the ground, and resting the muzzle of my gun upon a

rock that happened to lie convenient, took a steady and deadly aim for the butt of the ear of the largest, and the bear dropped in its tracks, and, after a few violent struggles, was dead.

The other bear, hearing the report of my gun and not knowing what to make of it, seated himself upon his haunches and kept a vigorous lookout in the direction where I was, but did not seem disposed to leave his game. Retaining my position behind the rock, I reloaded my gun, and again took deliberate aim for his forehead, when, making a bound forward, he fell, and expired immediately.

I then returned to camp and found the Indians huddled together in great terror, lest the bears, in their rage, after destroying me, should make a sally upon the camp. I told them their fears were groundless, as I had killed both their enemies. Yet, so incredulous were they, that it was some time before I could convince them of the truth of what I told them, although they heard the report of my gun on both occasions.

I finally succeeded in persuading the whole party to follow me to the place of combat, which they did at a respectful distance in the rear. When they came up and saw the two bears lying dead, their gratitude to me was unbounded, and they heaped upon me, both by words and signs, any amount of their rude encomiums, and seemed to regard me as but little inferior to that mysterious being whom they regard as the God of the Black-Foot nation.

Whilst I was skinning the bears, the Indians took the

remains of their companions, and having dug a shallow hole in the ground, deposited them therein, and then covered them with dirt, sticks, and stones.

The hides of these bears answered me a good purpose for a long time, in the way of supplying me with a bed, which I much needed, and to which the Indians made no objection.

Every thing being now ready, we started for the village, each one of us having as much as he could well carry upon his horse, and arrived, at a late hour of the night, amid much joy and satisfaction, expressed by the squaws and children, in consequence of our success.

There were but few signs of sorrow or grief expressed, even by the female relations of the two Indians who were destroyed by the bears—all such external demonstration being regarded by them as weakness, and unworthy the character of their people. Accordingly, upon the occurrence of death among them, they assume cheerfulness of countenance, nor suffer a melancholy look to escape them.

We were supplied with meat enough to last for some considerable time, and as these Indians seldom exert themselves until forced by necessity, their time for more than a month was spent in loitering about their village in a very listless manner.

Winter now set in in earnest, and I found it difficult to keep from freezing. I spent the most of my time at the chief's lodge, as it afforded a little better protection than any of the others, and I was always made a welcome guest. During this winter, a great deal of snow

fell ; a part of the time it lay four feet deep on the level surface, and, our provisions becoming scarce, we experienced much suffering from want of food before spring. During the deep snows, it was impossible to hunt to any advantage, and the consequence was that, in these times of scarcity, we had to supply the deficiency with dog-meat, which afforded but a scanty means of subsistence, as far as I was concerned. But the Indians regard this kind of food with favor as a great delicacy. Such is their partiality for this species of animal, however, that, unless pressed by hunger, they will not interfere with their mortal existence.

Whenever the weather would permit, I assisted them in hunting, and, by keeping up this plan from time to time, we reached spring without any deaths from starvation amongst us, although many other villages of the nation were not so fortunate, as we learned in the spring there had many perished for want of food during the severe weather.

This difficulty might be easily avoided, were they not usually so excessively slothful and improvident. Whilst they have enough to supply their wants to-day, they have no thoughts for the morrow, and rarely, if ever, go in search of food until forced to it by their necessities. When this necessity overtakes them, they engage in the necessary labor with cheerfulness and energy, and seem to enjoy it very much ; but as soon as their pressing wants are supplied, they again relapse into their usual sloth and inactivity. During the time I was with them, I tried to impress upon them the importance of

laying up a sufficient store of provisions for the winter; but I never succeeded in moving them a particle from their usual habits in this respect, although they would acknowledge the reasonableness of my suggestions.

It was now the first of May, and the weather was delightful, and vegetation was rapidly expanding in all its native wild luxuriance. The young tender grass had already clothed the prairies in their beautiful garb of green, and a great variety of wild flowers, with blushing modesty, were peeping from behind the rocks, logs, and trees. All nature seemed again to rejoice in the charms of a new-born spring. The birds, the beasts, and even the wild and uncultivated savage, exhibited new signs of life and renewed energy.

To one who has a taste to admire the works of the Almighty Architect, in their native wildness and romantic loveliness, perhaps no part of the world is better calculated to gratify it than this. Every thing appears to have been prepared, and is presented to the eye of the beholder upon a mammoth and most magnificent scale. The prairies, the rocks, the hills, the mountains, the rivers, the forests, the beasts, and the birds, are complete within themselves, and faultless to the intelligent observer.

We had just returned from the prairies, (where we had been spending the last ten days in the chase,) laden with a plentiful supply of beef and venison, when our village was visited by a number of deputies from another village, about thirty miles distant from our own. Their object was to crave assistance in the capture of a

number of bears, which had presumptuously visited their village a few evenings previous, and carried away two of their young women.

The Indians had heard of the fame of the pale-faced prisoner, (as they called me,) with regard to the mysterious skill with which he destroyed these animals, and were very anxious that I should accompany them to their village. The chief, myself, and about thirty of our warriors, went to their relief, and upon our arrival found them in a truly pitiable condition. The bears had paid them a second visit the night previous to our arrival, and, having broken into one of their huts, had carried away one of their young men and a child; and they were so affected with fear, that they knew not which way to turn themselves, or how to act.

As before remarked, these animals are a source of perpetual fear and dread to the savages, and many of them are destroyed by this foe every year. It is nothing uncommon for these beasts to make bold assaults upon their villages, and kill or carry off a number of the inhabitants before relief can be had. And, although the savages, goaded on by desperation, sometimes attack them, and occasionally kill one, yet, such is their dread of them, and the inefficiency of their means for destroying them, that it is with great reluctance that they attack them. And, indeed, when we take into consideration the size, strength, ferocity, and tenacity of life of these animals, it is not wonderful that they are terrible to these people. They are even a formidable and dangerous foe to combat, when brought in contact with the most de-

structive weapons, and sometimes prove more than a match for the arts of civilized man. The bears themselves appear to be conscious of the fear entertained of them by the Indians, and enjoy their supremacy with as much cruel zest as any other set of tyrants in the world; and, although the Indians and the bears have inhabited the same country together for many generations, yet they are far from being upon amicable terms, and, like the rival kingdoms of France and England, love to hate each other with a most cordial pungency.

It may seem strange to the reader, after what has been said of the prowess of the Black-Foot nation, that they should exhibit so much cowardice and fear of this species of foe—yet it is nevertheless true. In their wars and forays on other tribes, they are bold, adventurous, brave, and apparently heedless of danger. In the chase, in pursuit of any other species of game, they are all ardor, animation and pluck; but let it be known that one of this species of bears is in their vicinity, and, like a city smitten with the plague, their spirits at once droop, and all their courage forsakes them.

It being near sunset when we arrived at the village, it was too late to think of making any pursuit of the enemy this evening, and we concluded to defer all aggressive action until morning. But as the inhabitants were greatly in fear, lest the aggressors should return to their village on this night again, I advised them to build a large fire in the centre of the village, and to camp around it during the night; which, after the expression of some reluctance, they consented to do. The fire was

kept up all night, and the whole village, great and small, collected around it, and thus spent the night. There were but few of us, except the children, who slept during the watch ; for myself, I felt that the responsibility for their safety during that night rested upon my shoulders ; and with my rifle in hand, I kept a vigorous look-out during the whole time ; and so greatly were the fears of the Indians excited, that few of them so far forgot their peril as to drop asleep. As it happened, however, the foe did not molest us during the night, and after partaking of a scanty meal, I set out, accompanied by fifteen of the warriors, (principally from our own village,) in search of these audacious marauders, after having first ascertained the line of their march. We were not long in striking their trail, and found little difficulty in following it, as it was distinctly marked, the greater part of the way, with the blood of the victims recently carried away from the village by them.

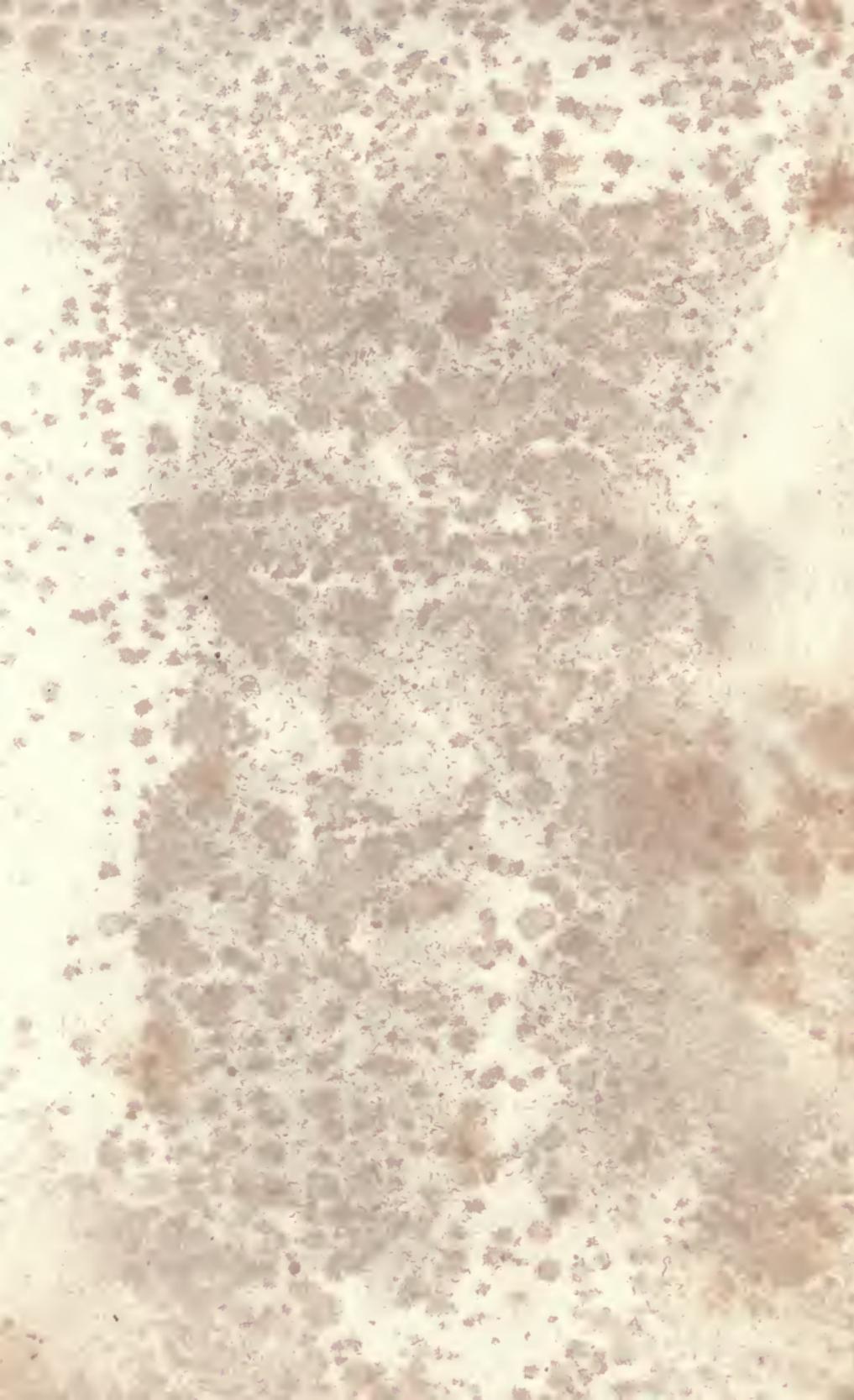
Their trail led us up the mountain's side to an enormous projecting cliff of rocks, into a cavity of which the bears seemed to have entered. At the entrance to this cavity, we discovered some of the bones of one of the Indians—the flesh having been all gnawed off by the bears.

This cliff of rocks was about four miles from the village ; and, from the signs, we had no doubt but the enemy made this their dwelling place for the time being, and were now within.

With all my assurances to the contrary, the Indians seemed uneasy as to their safety, and very anxious to

obtain a situation at a more respectful distance from the cliff. It was not probable that the bears would leave their place of retreat until near sunset, and it would be folly in us to make any attempt upon them where they now were. We therefore concluded to return to the village, and remain there until toward evening, and then again return to the vicinity of the rocks, and keep a sharp look-out until they made their appearace on the outside.

About four o'clock we again returned, and having stationed the Indians in a secure place behind some rocks, at a considerable distance from the den, with the command that they should remain quiet until I called to them, I proceeded to select my own position within a convenient distance from the entrance to the rocks. This having been accomplished according to my wishes, I took my seat, with rifle in hand, and patiently waited for the appearance of the enemy until the disk of the sun was almost beneath the western horizon, when, to my great relief, (as far as patience was concerned,) two very large grizzly bears emerged from the cavity in the rocks, and commenced snuffing the air, as though they were scenting something, in a very suspicious manner. They kept up such a constant motion, that for some time I found it difficult to shoot with any certainty of success, and to make a half-done job of it, was the least of my desires. The only certainty in bringing one of these animals down with a rifle ball, is by penetrating the brain. A shot in any part of the body is uncertain, and generally has the effect (for the time being) to en-





CONTEST WITH A BEAR.

FELCH - ARCHES

rage and increase their ferocity; and, although my rifle only run fifty-six balls to the pound, I was unwilling to risk a shot on one of these bears in any other part than the skull. Presently one of them started in a direct line for the point where I was secreted, and having arrived within fifteen yards of me, stopped, with its side toward me. I leveled my rifle in great haste, and fired for the back of the ear, but to my great surprise and terror, with a tremendous growl, he made directly for my place of refuge; which, of course, I was not slow in vacating. I started, with all the speed of which I was capable of exerting, toward the point of a projecting rock, in the direction of the place where the Indians had been concealed; in turning a corner of which, in order to ascend to its summit, and thereby escape the fangs of the monster, the bear lost sight of me, and pursued some of the Indians.

On hearing the report of my rifle, several of the Indians, in order to gratify their curiosity, were in the act of creeping up to the brow of the hill, to see how the contest was progressing; but seeing me running, and the bear in pursuit of me, they sprang to their feet, and ran for their lives—giving the alarm to all the others, who immediately followed their example.

By this time I had ascended to the top of the rock, and was a passive spectator of the scene before me.

The savages, in their flight, scattered in every possible direction; each one endeavoring to save himself by his superior speed. The wounded bear finally devoted all his attention to the hindmost Indian of the retreating

party, and soon overtaking him, with a blow from his huge paw, felled him to the earth. I had no other expectation than that the Indian was killed, and, having reloaded my gun, set off in pursuit of the bear. Before I came within shooting distance, the monster left him, and took a position at some distance in a pond of water, which was densely studded with a small growth of timber.

When I came up to the Indian, I found him still breathing, worse frightened than hurt; for as the ball of my rifle had passed through the lower jaw of the bear, completely shattering it, he was unable to do any harm with his fangs—and after having made the attempt to his heart's content, he retired in seeming disgust.—Upon examination, I found no bones had been broken; although the force with which he had applied his paw, had stunned his victim. He soon recovered himself, and made off for the village as fast as his legs could carry him, leaving the bear and I to arrange matters as best we could. The other Indians had disappeared entirely, and for aught I knew were ten miles away. I felt no disposition, however, to give the matter up in the shape it then presented, although it was getting late, and I was single-handed. I considered my reputation as the "bear-slayer" at stake in this transaction, and was determined to give him another trial before I left him, let the consequences be what they might. I therefore continued in pursuit of him; and as the pond was not large, I soon got within view of him, standing in the water up to his sides, endeavoring to quench his thirst by lapping, in which exercise he seemed to make but

poor speed, as not only his lower jaw, but his tongue also, was much mangled. I was not long in bringing my rifle to bear upon his scalp, when, using a great deal more caution than I had in aiming my first shot at him, I fired. At the crack of the rifle he sunk in the water, and after a few vigorous plunges, all was over with him ; and without going to the carcass, I started for the village, as the dusk of the evening was fast setting in.

It was after dark when I arrived, and you may suppose the savages were in a state of great terror and anxiety. The report brought in by those who fled in advance of the bear, and especially that part of it related by the Indian who was overtaken by him, filled them not only with fear, but with wonder and amazement also. The fugitives represented the bear as being as large as the largest sized buffalo bull, and of unprecedented ferocity.

I endeavored to allay their fears and soothe their anxiety, by telling them that at least one of the monsters was destroyed, and I thought there would be no danger from this twain hereafter.

It was long before I could convince them that I had killed this terrible animal, which had been a source of so much fear and anxiety throughout the tribe. Yet, when satisfied that the big bear was really killed, they expressed more gratitude than I ever knew them to upon any other occasion. Indeed, they fairly oppressed me with laudations ; and for the time being, I was the centre of attraction for all eyes.

At this time, Hohoako-Kiwa, the chief of this tribe

of the Black-Foot nation, gave me the name of "Wap-sa-Kiwan"—"the Bear-Slayer"—by which cognomen I was recognized as long as I remained with them.

In the morning, the chief, a few of the warriors, and myself started in search of the dead bear, which we found floating upon the surface of the water in the place where I left him. We soon managed to get him on shore, and were not long in removing his shaggy coat. He was a tremendous animal, full nine feet in length, and four feet high. The Indians selected portions of the flesh, which they carried to the village for food; a single mouthful of it, however, was sufficient to satisfy the craving of my appetite, as I found it not only strong, but otherwise offensive to my taste.

After this, we remained with these Indians at their village two days and nights, without finding any more trouble from bears, or any other cause. At the end of this time we returned to our own village. Before leaving them, I assured them that they need have no farther apprehensions from this den of bears, as it is a uniform custom with them, if they are disturbed in one place of concealment, to seek another immediately. And if one of these animals loses its mate by the ruthless assaults of the hunter, the survivor is almost sure to leave its former haunts, and retire among the rocks or mountains to a considerable distance.

The report of my rifle had the same effect on the savages of this village that it had upon those of the one of my adoption; and, in fact, the same astonishment and awe were manifested by all with whom I became

acquainted during my five years' captivity among them. It was something new wherever I came, and the report caused by the explosion of the powder with which it was charged, filled them with amazement and fear, until I explained the mystery to them, (as far at least as I wished it understood,) when they would seem satisfied, and even pleased with it.

On returning to our village, I ascertained that my ammunition was almost exhausted ; and to procure any more seemed out of the question, as it was many hundreds of miles, probably, to any point where I could expect to procure supplies. I mentioned these facts to the chief, and desired him to allow a number of his young men to accompany me to one of the stations of the Hudson Bay Company, in order to procure (as I alleged) a fresh supply of ammunition. But to this proposition he would by no means consent ; for although he seemed very anxious that I should have a supply of this necessary article, yet he would not consent that I, in my individual capacity, or accompanied by his young men, should venture away so far in search of it. From whatever cause he rejected this proposition of mine, he no doubt acted prudently, as it was my intention, in case I succeeded in obtaining my request, after reaching one of the stations of the Company, never to show my face again among the savages. I was not so fortunate, however, as to make my escape so easily ; yet I still hoped for the best, and was determined ere long to seek some means of escape from them, and to try to make my way back to the Company on the coast of the Pacific.

The undertaking, it is true, would be fraught with danger and difficulty, and especially so, when undertaken by a single man ; for, besides the danger of again falling into the hands of hostile savages by the way, I would be liable to encounter, by night as well as by day, ferocious animals. But all these difficulties, added to that of supplying myself with food during my flight, was not sufficient to deter me from the undertaking when a proper opportunity should present itself. Thus far, I had seen no chance for making a successful attempt ; and notwithstanding my efforts to convince the Indians that I was entirely satisfied with their mode of life and my treatment, yet they always seemed to have an eye upon me, lest I should attempt something of the kind. It is true, that on several occasions in the chase, I seemed to be left by them comparatively at my own discretion, but it was uniformly under circumstances that forbade any attempt at an escape.

The powder which I had been using heretofore, was that contained in my own flask at the time of our capture, and that found in the flask which had formerly belonged to Moulton, and which, fortunately, had not been consumed with his body. Three bars of lead, and the moulds for running bullets, that belonged to each of our rifles, had been found and carried away by the Indians at the same time. This lead, run into bullets, had thus far supplied my rifle in this particular. But my supply of both powder and lead was now about exhausted ; and when the ammunition was gone, my rifle would be of no use.

After retiring to rest one evening, revolving these things in my own mind, the thought rushed upon me that the bulk of the ammunition that we had brought with us from Vancouver was possibly yet in our hut; as I had no recollection of its having been discovered and taken by the Indians at the time of our capture. We had brought with us from Vancouver fifteen pounds of powder and about fifty pounds of lead, and the probability was, that more than half of this supply had been left in our lodge; which, if not destroyed since our capture, was there yet.

In order to preserve our powder from waste by accident, at the time we built our lodge, we had prepared a kind of garret with a few puncheons, upon which we carefully stowed away our ammunition. The powder was kept in a tin box—the same in which we had carried it from the station—and the lead had been laid away in loose bars.

In the morning I informed Hohoako-Kiwa, and he seemed much pleased that there was still a prospect for a supply of these necessaries so near at hand. He proposed that we should set out the following day for our old station, in order to make the necessary investigation, to which proposal I acceded; and accordingly on the next morning the chief and myself, with fifteen of his warriors, started on our journey.

CHAPTER VI.

HAVING traveled over three days, we at length arrived at the camp from which, nearly a year before, Moulton, Thornton, and myself had been so ruthlessly carried away. The sight of this place brought vividly before my mind, not only the pleasurable emotions that had thrilled my heart whilst in the enjoyment of the society of my two friends, but also the scenes of horror and misery which we were forced to endure after our captivity by these savages.

The Indians observed that I looked melancholy, and some of them inquired the cause. I told them that the long journey had very much fatigued me, and that I felt quite unwell. I felt the necessity of exerting self-control, however, and soon succeeded in wearing a more cheerful countenance.

Upon approaching the hut, every thing appeared to be in the same condition that it was when we left it; and upon entering it, I found the box and the lead in the same place where we left them, undisturbed; and upon opening the box, the powder was found undamaged from any cause whatever, and its explosive quality as good as it ever had been. I was very much gratified on

realizing this good fortune, and the Indians seemed equally pleased. We encamped for the night on this (to me) almost sacred spot of earth, and it was with great reluctance that I quitted it in the morning.

Prior to starting for this place, I had made up my mind that, should a favorable opportunity present itself, I would attempt my escape from the savages during our journey. But while here I could see no opportunity offering, which presented a reasonable prospect for the accomplishment of my object. Indeed, there seemed to be a kind of fatality controlling me; for, although I was watching for opportunities, and exceedingly anxious to make my escape, and though I was constantly resolved upon that measure, yet there was a seeming lack of the necessary energy and resolution to carry my plans into execution. And in view of what followed during a portion of my subsequent captivity, I have often thought that the hand of Providence was conspicuous in shaping my course at this time. It was three weeks from the time that we left, until our return to the village. The greater portion of this time was spent in hunting, during our return home. In this journey we killed a number of deer, antelope, and one elk, which afforded us a fine supply of venison for some time.

On our return, the whole village turned out to welcome us, and seemed very much rejoiced at our success in obtaining the ammunition. The quantity that I now had on hand would, with reasonable economy, last me for years, or, at least, as long as I thought it probable I should be with the savages; and enough also, perhaps,

to enable me to provide the means of subsistence in making my escape.

We had been at home but a few days, when a number of deputies arrived at the village from one of the other tribes belonging to the Black-Foot nation, informing us of a battle which they had recently fought with the Crow Indians, in which they had killed a great number of the enemy, and had taken several prisoners, (among whom was a pale-face squaw,) and inviting the warriors of our village to attend the council to be held in a few days, to determine on the fate of the prisoners.

As is the custom with these savages on such occasions, during the stay of the deputies, feasting, rejoicing, and carousing was the order of the day. I felt relieved when the intruders upon the quiet of the village had departed.

Preparations were immediately commenced, and every one seemed on tiptoe with excitement, in anticipation of the enjoyments to be realized at this council, and the cruel tortures which would no doubt follow it. The chief, and a number of the warriors, insisted that I should accompany them, which I finally consented to do—principally on account of the report by the deputies, that there was a white woman among the prisoners. I determined, if this was the fact, to exert myself to the utmost to save her. I felt confident that, with many of the Indians, I could exert in her favor an influence which would be hard to overcome.

Every arrangement being completed, we mounted our horses and pursued our journey, traveling upon the

canter until evening, with the exception of about an hour's halt at noon, in order to rest and graze our horses. On the second day, about two o'clock, we arrived at the village, and were met and escorted in with the usual tumultuous demonstration characteristic of these people. My appearance among them was hailed by the savages as a matter of gratulation, wherever my bear-destroying exploits were known amongst them. And Wapsa-Kiwan was received with the respect due a person of consideration, and treated with all the kindness and courtesy that their savage natures would permit.

In company with a number of the savages, I went to the tent to see the prisoners, where I saw ten poor, degraded looking savages huddled together in the tent, under charge of a competent guard. Their eyes were all fixed upon the ground, apparently in deep meditation ; in which position they continued during the time I observed them. Among them were two squaws of the Crow nation, and they were all nearly naked. The males were not so tall as the Black-Feet generally are, but were muscular, and compactly built. The females were short and clumsy in their appearance, and their features were almost hideous.

I had seen as yet nothing of the pale-face squaw, of whom the deputies had spoken ; and I took the liberty to inquire of the guard if they had such a prisoner. One of them pointed me to the opposite corner of the tent, where, partially covered with a quantity of old, filthy skins, I observed the form of a female laying, to all appearance, sound asleep.

Her appearance, and manner of breathing, indicated extreme weakness and fatigue, if not disease. Her face was pale and hectic. Her features presented great regularity of outline, and before falling into the hands of the savages, she had no doubt been a handsome woman, as traces of what she had once been still lingered about her person.

Whilst contemplating her appearance as she thus lay sleeping, many strange emotions passed through my mind, as to who she was, how she had fallen into the hands of the savages, and the miseries untold through which she had probably passed since she had become a victim of their cruelties.

I finally asked, and obtained leave from the guard to speak to her—for at this time all the sympathy of my nature was aroused in her behalf. I stooped and spoke to her in English, saying: “Strange lady, how fare you?” She opened her eyes, and with an appearance of surprise, gazed steadily in my face for some time, as though doubting the correctness of her senses—her eyes meanwhile filling with tears, she covered them with her hands.

The eloquence of this appeal to my sympathies, so affected me, that in my own mind I resolved, if possible, to save her from the farther brutality of the savages, or, with her, perish at their hands.

I continued to address her in a kind and soothing manner, and so far gained her confidence, that she entered into conversation with me; and after I had briefly informed her that I was an Englishman by birth and

education, she gave me a hasty account of her capture by the savages, and her subsequent treatment by them, which will be related in the following pages of this book. She seemed almost overcome with joy and gratitude, that in this dark hour of her existence, far away as she supposed from any civilized being—the captive of savages, perhaps as degraded and brutal as any upon the earth—she should be permitted again to recognize the face of a countryman.

She also told me that her health was rapidly declining; and that the exposure and cruelty to which she had been subjected within the last few days—after having been taken prisoner by these Indians, and compelled to travel on foot in a very exposed condition for many miles—had completely prostrated her.

I promised her that I would spare no means within my power to save her from the horrible doom which I had no doubt was pending over the heads of the prisoners. She said that such had been her suffering and exposure since her captivity, that death, even in its darkest and most repulsive form, had lost its terrors to her, and that she had often asked her Maker to send her death, as a blessed relief from all her sorrows, and thus terminate a state of existence which had become a burden to her, and that she had hoped that her day of departure was at hand. She, however, finally consented that I should exert my influence in her behalf, more as a gratification to me, probably, than in consonance with her own desires. I now took my leave, promising to come again as soon as circumstances would admit.

It was now getting toward evening, and preparations to light the camp-fires were rapidly progressing in every direction. The night was spent by the savages in the usual revelry, and early in the morning every one was agog for the council, which was to terminate the fate of the prisoners on this day. The camp for the ceremony was pitched about three miles south of the village, beneath the shade of a number of large trees, skirting the bank of a small stream. About nine o'clock in the morning, the savages, preceded by the prisoners, left the village for the encampment.

Through the influence of Hohoako-Kiwa and some of the other Indians of our party, I obtained permission for the pale-face prisoner to ride my horse to the camp, upon the plea of her indisposition.

Upon arriving at the camp, I assisted her to alight, and she thanked me cordially for these acts of kindness toward her. The prisoners were kept in charge of the guard until the council had assembled, when they were conducted into the midst of the circle formed by the savages.

For some time previous I had been busy with Hohoako-Kiwa, and the other savages with whom I was acquainted, in behalf of the pale-face prisoner, and perhaps for my gratification more than anything else, they promised to do all they could to save her life. When I informed them that she belonged to my country, and, like myself, had been taken prisoner, they were greatly surprised, and seemed at once to comprehend my anxiety for her relief; and from this time took an active part in

her behalf. The chief said that her fate would depend altogether upon the action of the council—as all questions of this kind, according to the customs of their nation, were determined in this way; although he thought, in deference to my wishes, and the estimation in which I was held by many warriors of the nation, as well as from the fact that, being a prisoner among the Crows, she would not be regarded as an enemy, that her life would be spared.

As I had been regularly initiated into the honors of a warrior of the Black-Foot nation, as a reward for the services I had rendered them, in destroying some of their most dreaded enemies, I had the same right to sit in council, speak, and vote, that any other warrior had, and on this occasion I was determined to enjoy the privilege.

The ceremonies observed by this council were substantially the same as those observed in the trial of Moulton and myself, elsewhere related. A number of the chiefs and warriors had addressed the council—a majority of whom argued in favor of the sentence of death against all the prisoners, by burning at the stake. Hohoako-Kiwa and a few others, in their speeches, excepted the pale-face squaw (as they called her) from this terrible penalty—giving, as reasons, her innocence of crime against the nation, and my earnest desire to save her; and urging my claims to be gratified in this respect, from the eminent services I had rendered, and might still render the nation.

After the chiefs and warriors had concluded, I arose, and addressed the council substantially as follows :

I remarked, that in conversation with the prisoner, I had learned that she was a countrywoman of mine, who had been taken prisoner by a tribe of Indians on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, and had, without any fault of her own, been sold from one tribe to another, until she had fallen into the hands of the Crows, where she was recently found and taken prisoner by a band of the Black-Foot nation ; and, in making this request, I was but conforming to the usages of my own country, which, upon all occasions, urged upon its citizens the claims of humanity, when any of its people were found in distress. I reminded them, that since I had been with them I had tried in every thing to conform to their usages, and had, in several instances, been of important service to the tribe, as they themselves were willing to acknowledge. And warning them against provoking the anger of the great Spirit, (who gave me the power to serve them,) by rejecting my petition, I sat down amid a profound silence.

This address was delivered in their own language, as they could understand no other, and at this time I had so far acquired a knowledge of theirs, that I could understand and speak it quite intelligibly. During the delivery of my remarks, the Indians gave me profound attention, and some of them seemed to receive what I said with great satisfaction ; while from the countenances of others, it was plain that what I was saying was distasteful to them.

The council broke up about three o'clock, without

coming to any definite conclusion in the case of the pale-face; but the savages were all sentenced to be burned on the two following days.

After the deliberations of the council had concluded for the day, the prisoners were conducted back to their quarters in charge of the guard, and after eating a little broiled meat, I again visited their tent, where I found the object of my solicitude sitting up, and trying to eat some uncooked venison which had been given her by the guard. I inquired if she would not prefer to have it broiled. She said she would; but since her captivity amongst the savages, she had rarely enjoyed so great a luxury. I went to our tent and procured a few choice slices of venison, broiled them nicely over the fire, and carried them to her. She seemed to relish the meat very much, and was more cheerful than I had before seen her.

She inquired of me as to the result of the council, and, after having informed her of every thing concerning it, she thanked me with much feeling for the interest I had taken in her case. She said she thought her time had come, and that she was resigned to receive her release in any way her Heavenly Father should permit.

I endeavored to re-assure her, by telling her I hoped she had many years yet to live, and that she would ultimately be enabled to return to her friends and country.

After preserving silence for a few moments, she said: "No! I shall never again see my friends or country in this life: the indescribable suffering I have endured for the last two years has not only destroyed my constitution, but even the desire of life. And, were it even

possible for me again to return to my friends in England, such is the prostration of my spirits, that, after the excitement of a first meeting with them had passed, I should again relapse into a life of solitary misery, but little preferable to the one I am now enduring. All my prospects for life have been blasted, and I have been reduced to a point of degradation that is revolting to my own mind, and that my conscience abhors. And although this has all come upon me without any fault of my own, but in opposition to my prayers, tears and agonized efforts to the contrary, yet the conscious innocence and purity of my life, prior to the dark hour when I became a victim to the unrestrained passions of a savage, condemns the degradation into which I have fallen, and refuses in the smallest degree to relinquish an iota of the sentence: thus rendering life to me a burden.

“It is a truth in theology, no doubt, as well as in common sense, that we are only responsible for that over which we have or may have control. But, as it is equally true that whether degradation be brought upon us voluntarily or in opposition to our best efforts, and by means over which we have, or can have, no influence whatever, purity equally condemns the thing in either case. It is the eyes of purity which are constantly looking in upon this conscious sense of degradation, (although involuntary,) which poisons and renders offensive to my taste, the cup of life.”

Such were the candor and truthfulness of these remarks, that I dared not attempt to controvert or gainsay

them. I told her that I hoped Providence would so shape our future, that we might have reason to rejoice in the knowledge that "all things work together for the good of those who love and serve Him." Expressing a wish that she might enjoy a good night's rest, I bade her farewell for the night, with thoughts more sombre than those with which I entered the tent.

The more I talked with her, the stronger became my interest in her behalf; and although, as matters now looked, it was hard to tell what would be her fate, I still felt a consciousness that her life would be spared; and, upon learning from Hohoako-Kiwa that the council would be convened in the morning, to hear again from Wapsa-Kiwan, I felt that success was almost certain.

The council assembled about the same time as on the previous morning, and the pale-face squaw was conducted to her former position in the centre of the circle. Prior to addressing the council, Hohoako-Kiwa beckoned me aside, and suggested the propriety, in my remarks, of dwelling with a great deal of force on my power to destroy ferocious and dangerous animals, and particularly the bears, which infest their country. I thanked him for the suggestion, and returned to the council, which was in waiting to hear me. Before I commenced speaking, one of the chiefs stated to the council, that, owing to a difference of opinion, the council had not been able to agree in regard to the disposition to be made of the pale-face squaw; and they had unanimously agreed to meet again this morning, to hear what Wapsa-Kiwan could say in her behalf, and why

the same penalty should not be inflicted on her that was to fall on the other prisoners. He farther said that the usages of the Block-Foot nation required the same penalty to be inflicted on all prisoners taken in war, or from a hostile camp, unless especial reasons could be shown why exceptions should be made. Having concluded his remarks, he resumed his seat amid the profoundest silence.

The council now gave me to understand that they would hear my argument. I arose and spoke in the Black-Foot tongue to this effect :

“ Warriors and braves of the Black-Foot nation :—I am not insensible to the great kindness you have been pleased to extend to me, in thus permitting me to appear before a council of your wise men and braves, in order to plead the cause of a poor white squaw, from my own country, who, upon a visit to see her father, many miles on the other side of the Rocky Mountains, was unfortunately taken prisoner by a strange tribe of Indians of that country, and, after being subjected to untold abuse and ill treatment, was sold to another tribe, and still another, until she fell into the hands of those whom your braves recently succeeded in chastising. And then and there, in company with a number of others, she was taken captive, and is now on her trial before this council.

Were I sensible that she had been guilty, even in the least degree, by thought, word, or deed, against the power of the Black-Foot nation, I should not so far

presume upon the magnanimity of this council as to stand here in her defense. But such is not the fact. Like the swan which floats upon the bosom of the waters of your own lakes, her life has been pure and spotless, and she is now ready to thank the Great Spirit, whom she loves to serve and obey, that she has fallen into the hands of the braves of the great Black-Foot nation, where, she has confidence to believe, from assurances that I have given her, that her condition will be much improved. And now I appeal to my Black-Feet brothers—make not your pale-face brother a liar before his countrywoman, by passing a severe sentence.

Since I have been among you, it has been my first object to deserve and have the confidence of your braves—esteeming this one of the greatest honors to which I could attain. I have, on several occasions, risked my own, in order to save the lives of your people; and the Great Spirit whom I worship has given me power over bears, and all other ferocious beasts, that I may, upon any occasion that I desire, call to my aid, for their destruction, the thunder and lightning which sleeps upon the summits of your mountains.

This is the first request that I have asked at your hands; and, should you refuse to grant it, the Great Spirit, who watches over and protects me, may take from me the power which he has given me over the beasts of the forest; and the bears and other desperate animals may be let loose upon you, and your young men, women, and children may be destroyed in great numbers.

The Great Spirit whom I serve has commanded me to appear before this council of your nation, and speak to you in behalf of my countrywoman, that, being free from guilt, her life might be spared at your hands."

Having said thus much, I sat down, and all remained silent for a few moments, when one of the principal chiefs, after the customary approbatory ugh ! said in the Black-Foot tongue, "Pale brother talk much good;" when the exclamation of approbation being echoed by many, the war-club was passed around the circle, without being accepted by a single chief or warrior.

My remarks upon this occasion seemed to have a very great effect upon the council, and for some time before I had concluded them, I observed, from the expression of their countenances, that they were being appreciated by them.

During the time I was speaking, the captive sat in the same position, with her eyes fixed upon the ground, and the color in her face would come and go, as though some fearful struggle was in progress within. I had supposed that she did not understand what I was saying, as I spoke in the Black-Foot language; but she subsequently told me that she comprehended the greater part of my remarks, as there was a great similarity among all the Indian dialects that she had yet heard.

The council having unanimously declared in favor of life for the pale-face squaw, they, at the same time, resolved that she should be kept, and her wants supplied, under my care and direction.

A tent was then provided for her reception for the time being, and I procured the services of an old squaw to administer to her wants, until we were ready to return to our village.

It was about 11 o'clock when the council broke up, and the cruel process of burning the prisoners was immediately commenced.

I should have made an effort to save these captives, also, from their cruel fate; but I knew that if I attempted this, the probability was that I should fail in every part of it, and therefore deemed it prudent on my part only to ask immunity on the part of the one in whom I felt most interested.

Five stakes had been driven into the ground, and all the Indian prisoners were conducted to the place of execution, and five of them were fastened to the stakes, and the fire applied to the faggots. Whilst this was going on, and during the whole time the bodies of the captives were being consumed, the usual amount of frightful noise, rejoicings, and savage contortions were kept up.

Such was the horror of the scene to me, that I withdrew before the bodies of the victims were consumed. I was astonished at the firm endurance with which these ignorant savages endured their torments. When they were completely wrapped in the flames, they showed not the least sign of suffering—their features retaining the same rigid firmness as before they were fastened to the stake.

Perhaps no one who has not witnessed the degrada-

tion and cruelty of these more than heathen people, can properly appreciate the blessings of a Christian civilization. We often conclude that the world is bad enough, even under the teachings of the Scripture, and so it is; but *fully* to appreciate the blessings which a Christian people enjoy, it is necessary for the individual to at least witness the wretched state of ignorance, degradation and shame into which these people are sunk.

From the terrible scene of cruelty that I had been witnessing, I returned to the tent, oppressed with the horrors of the inhuman spectacle. I felt exceedingly anxious to leave this (to me) gloomy place, and to return to the village; but, lest such a suggestion might give offense to the savages, I dared not mention it. As all I had to hope for in my present condition depended upon my retaining their favor and confidence, and although my heart was sad and oppressed beyond measure, I thought it prudent to at least assume cheerfulness, and seem to enjoy what was so pleasing to them. Although they excused me from taking an active part in these tragic scenes, yet they insisted that I should be present and witness them; and they would have taken it as a grave offense had I refused.

On my return to the tent, I found Roxana (for, as she told me, that was her Christian name) sitting up, and apparently engaged in deep thought. I inquired after her health, and how she was satisfied with the result of the council in her case. She said her health was as good as it had been for some time past; and as for the result of the council in disposing of her case,

although she owed me a debt of gratitude which she should never be able to cancel, yet she feared the sequence would be, merely to prolong her miseries in this life. "Yet," said she, "inasmuch as it has seemed good, in the wisdom of my great Benefactor, that I should again escape with my life, I will endeavor to abide cheerfully my time, and, as far as possible, to be content with my unhappy lot."

I endeavored, by conversation, to rouse her drooping spirits to cheerfulness, and, in some measure, succeeded. But so deep had been her humiliation, and so indelible the impression it had made on her mind, that she seemed to have lost all taste and desire for any thing pertaining to time or sense, and to have settled down into a deep and permanent melancholy. I still entertained hopes, however, that, by care and attention, I could arouse her from this seeming stupor.

I had thus far prepared her food with my own hands, and although I had nothing but venison to give her, yet she seemed to enjoy it with something of a relish, and to be very thankful that her condition in this respect was so much improved. She told me that since her capture, now over two years, her food had almost entirely been confined to raw flesh—often of the most forbidding and filthy kind.

As a general rule, all the savages of this region, so far as my knowledge extends, eat a large proportion of their meat raw; and I have seen them, before life was extinct in an animal, cut pieces from the quivering flesh and eat them.

They are uniformly filthy to excess, and take no pains whatever to avoid dirt in their cookery. A superabundance of the hair and excrement of the animal is no impediment to the appetites of these savages, when found in conjunction (which is nearly always the case) with the flesh.

On this evening, I prepared a bed for Roxana, of a number of clean, fresh skins, which I collected together for that purpose, and, in the morning, had the satisfaction to learn from her, that she had enjoyed a good night's rest, and that she felt much improved.

To-day, the remaining five prisoners were to be burned, and preparations were in active progress for the consummation. About 9 o'clock, the prisoners were conducted to the stakes, and securely attached thereto, when the fire was applied to the faggots, and the same scene of horror, in every essential particular, that was witnessed yesterday, was again enacted. The victims exhibited the same firm stoicism as that shown by those who had suffered first, and bore their torments with as little concern, apparently, as any martyr who ever suffered in the cause of his Master.

The encampment having broke up, we returned to the village, two miles from the camp, where we spent the night, and, in the morning, set off for our own village. Through the assistance of Hohoako-Kiwa, I procured a horse for Roxana to ride, as it was no part of my plan that she should remain behind; and the Indians, in deference to me, seemed willing that this matter should be left entirely to my control. I constructed a kind of

saddle of a large bear-skin for her use, and although we had to ride very fast in order to keep up with the Indians, she stood the journey much better than I had expected.

We arrived at our village on the third day of our homeward-bound journey, and were made welcome by the inhabitants who we had left behind. The chief very kindly invited me to bring the pale-face squaw to his lodge, which offer I gladly accepted for the time being.

Hohoako-Kiwa and his wife had always treated me with as much kindness and consideration as was consistent with the ignorance and degradation of their savage state; and, if for no other reason, I hoped, for the sake of Wapsa Kiwan, they would receive Roxana in the same way. And in this I was not mistaken; for, whilst we were inmates of their lodge, I have no recollection of ever making a request on her behalf, but, if possible, it was complied with.

At my request, Hohoako-Kiwa permitted me to select, from the fur taken from our camp at the time of our capture, such skins as I might wish, for the purpose of supplying Roxana's necessities in the way of clothing. I made choice of such skins as were the finest, and the most easily put into the proper form. Upon presenting these furs to Roxana, she expressed much gratitude, as her wardrobe amounted to scarcely any thing—being simply the filthy skins worn by the savages among whom she had been living. In a very short time she had prepared for herself, from these skins, a

kind of wrapper, which, although not exactly after the cut of Parisian style, was, nevertheless, very comfortable to her, and not altogether without grace in appearance.

I was much pleased at this improvement in the way of clothing, and, at my request, the chief's wife wrought for her a neat and tidy pair of moccasins; as thus far, since her shoes had been taken from her immediately after her capture, she had nothing to wear upon her feet.

The cut of her wrapper seemed, at first, to amuse the squaws exceedingly; but, in a short time, they seemed to take no further notice of its oddity, and she was left in the uninterrupted enjoyment of her own taste, in this particular.

Upon taking Roxana to the chief's lodge, it was not my intention, by any means, to make it a place of permanent abode, but, with the chief's permission, to build a cabin of my own, where the necessities and conveniences required for an invalid might be better supplied, as I entertained strong hopes that, notwithstanding the shattered condition of her constitution, and her consequent prostration of spirits, with careful nursing, she would ultimately recover. Upon my making the request, the chief gave me permission to build a cabin for our use, and pointed out the place, in the vicinity of his own.

With one of the axes taken from us at our capture, in the course of a few weeks I built, from logs and puncheons, a habitation which, for permanence, neat-

ness and comfort, was far in advance of anything of the kind in the village, the chief's residence not excepted. I put into it a good puncheon floor, and covered it with a permanent roof of the same material, and with mud, logs, and sticks, I made a passable chimney. The interstices between the logs of the cabin, I closed with mud and sticks, so that, in the coldest winter weather, I could make it comfortable. A door and window afforded us the means of locomotion and light, both of which could be closed at pleasure, by means of swinging doors, made from hewn puncheons, hung upon wooden hinges, and fastened with pins.

During the progress of my building, I was constantly surrounded by a troop of savages, of every age and both sexes, whose curiosity seemed greatly excited at my singular style of workmanship. They offered me no assistance whatever, in any way, but simply loitered about, in a state of masterly idleness and inactivity. But as this may probably be considered as the normal condition of these savages, perhaps there is nothing strange in it.

Having completed my cabin, I constructed, with the axe and our auger, (which the Indians had preserved since our capture,) two rough bedsteads—one for the use of Roxana, and the other for myself. These beds were supplied with a number of buffalo, bear, and other skins, as clothing. Our bedsteads afforded the savages a new object for curiosity, and gave them great latitude for exercising their faculty of wonder, as they had never before seen anything like them, and would, probably,

never have discovered the proper use for them, had not the skins been placed upon them.

At this stage of my improvements in building and furnishing, we moved into our new habitation, and found it, under the circumstances, neat, commodious, and comfortable; indeed, so far were we in advance of our neighbors, in the style of our town residence and other comforts, that we might, with justice, have been obnoxious to the charge of aristocracy.

By the use of the axe and the auger, and some shells prepared by the Indians, I also added to our furniture a few benches and stools, and a wooden bucket, which we found of great service.

I succeeded in persuading an old squaw to come and live with us in our cabin, that, during my absence in our hunting excursions, and upon other calls for my time, Roxana might have the attention her circumstances required, (at least, as far as a squaw could render it.) Before leaving her to her mercy, however, I took great pains in showing her what I wanted done during my absence, and how to do it, and was pleased to realize the fact, that Ke-Ka (which was the squaw's name) took a great deal of pride in trying to deserve my commendation in all that she undertook to do. And although she was exceedingly ignorant and awkward at first, yet, by her desire to please, and untiring patience on the part of Roxana, she soon became of great value to us. This squaw was a widow, having lost her husband and three sons in the wars with the Flat-Heads, some years before; and, having no other children, she

was almost entirely dependent upon the generosity of the warriors for a scanty subsistence ; consequently, she seemed well pleased with the comforts of her new home, for besides the other advantages that she enjoyed from being with us, she seemed to look with much complacency upon our well-filled larder, which was at this time stocked with meats of almost every kind which the country afforded. And, to her honor be it said, ingratitude was not one of her sins. She always appeared grateful for the comforts which she enjoyed with us, and yielded a ready obedience to Roxana's and my commands.

It is, perhaps, unnecessary for me to inform the reader, that the more I saw of and conversed with Roxana, the more deeply I became interested in her. So helpless, innocent and confiding, yet entirely candid and truthful in all her ways did she seem, that at times I could scarcely realize that the stricken being before me was of this world. So terribly had her spirit been chastened by the many trials and perils through which she had passed, that her humility and trust, (in her Heavenly Protector,) like that of a little child, seemed to flow unbidden and without affectation from her heart.

Hitherto, since my captivity, my life had seemed almost objectless, and my only hopes were centered in the probability of my escape from the savages. But now, Providence had entirely changed my relations in life ; for, although I had not entirely given over my hope of escape, yet, in consequence of the sacred charge which had been placed, entirely Providentially, under my protective care, the time and the opportunity for such an effort on my part had been indefinitely postponed.

Should Roxana regain her health, and again become strong and vigorous, it was my intention to try to effect her escape, as well as my own; and to use my best efforts to make our way back to some one of the posts of the Company on the Pacific. But, in the present state of her health, such an enterprise would be little better than madness; and when her health would admit of so dangerous an undertaking, if ever, was uncertain.

But, let circumstances lead as they would, I was determined never to leave this helpless creature to the mercies of the savages; but, if necessary, in order to her sustenance and protection, to spend the remaining portion of my days with these savages, amid the gorges and defiles of the Rocky Mountains, and the adjacent plains and prairies.

A considerable portion of my time was necessarily spent in company with the savages in the chase. On these occasions, I would frequently be absent from the village from two to three weeks; but I had the greatest confidence in the care and attention of Ke-Ka towards Roxana. In this way, I was enabled to keep our cabin plentifully supplied with the best of meats, and skins, which were equally useful in supplying us with wearing apparel and bed-clothes.

Upon returning home after our absence on these occasions, I was uniformly greeted with the kindest expressions of sympathy, in all that had occurred to us whilst we were gone; not from Roxana alone, but even Ke-Ka, after a time, would come with humble importunity, endeavoring to make herself useful, by doing all

she knew to render me comfortable; and I sometimes thought that, after all, I had great reason to be thankful to Providence for the gift of at least a peaceful home. And when I contrasted myself and my surroundings with the miserable, squalid beings with whom I was daily associated, and their filthy habitations, their ignorance and superstition, I felt that I ought to thank Him, who had made me to differ from my fellows. And yet this is the great Black-Foot nation!

In our next chapter, I will give a more particular account of Roxana—her capture, and subsequent treatment by the Indians.

CHAPTER VII.

WE doubt not but that the reader, by this time, is anxious to know something more of the history of Roxana and her misfortunes, which we will now proceed to relate, substantially in her own language.

Roxana Wakeman was the daughter of James Wakeman, who was an extensive stockholder in, and secretary to, the Hudson Bay Company. He was regarded as being a man of great wealth, and had but three children, all of whom were daughters—Roxana being the eldest of the three, and her father's favorite. The family resided in London, while the father had spent the greater part of his time, for the several last years, in Oregon, attending to the interests of the Company. Having made a visit home, and spent some time with his family, he again returned to Oregon in the latter part of the year 1799, taking with him Roxana, then a sprightly girl in her seventeenth year.

Being naturally of a romantic, adventurous turn of mind, and being much with her father during his stay at home, she had heard him from time to time speak of the greatness of the Western Continent—its lofty mountains, its majestic rivers, and the grandeur and beauty of its wide-spread prairie scenery, where a gently undulating surface, often many miles in extent, covered

with tall grass, interspersed with the most gorgeously beautiful of Flora's treasures, variegated here and there by a clump of beautiful young timber, and the whole scene enlivened frequently by almost innumerable herds of every species of wild game found in this region. By listening to her father's glowing descriptions, Roxana caught a portion of his enthusiasm, and begged to be permitted to accompany him to this (in her imagination) almost fairy land.

Mr. Wakeman at first peremptorily refused the request of his daughter, urging upon her consideration the perils of the voyage, and the very great exposure of various kinds to which one so tenderly reared would be subjected by a residence in this wild, although sublime and beautiful country. But these representations only increased Roxana's desire to accompany her father, that she might add to his comfort, by nursing him in sea-sickness, or any other affliction which might befall him in the long voyage, and enliven his leisure hours during his remaining sojourn in the Western wilds. She urged this reasoning strongly upon her father, and he, probably pleased to find a spirit so near akin to his own in his favorite child, and intending to return to England in the autumn of the following year, in an evil hour, consented; and preparations were immediately made for the voyage. Their ocean journey was tedious, but prosperous, and they arrived safely, in the latter part of the year 1799, at Vancouver, one of the stations of the Company of which her father was Secretary.

During the winter, all went pleasantly in the small,

yet agreeable circle composed of the officers of the Company and their families ; and to Roxana was added the especial gratification of being near her father.

In the spring of the year 1800, Mr. Wakeman and his daughter, in company with several gentlemen, and some of the employees about the station to act as servants and guards, set out from Vancouver for another station, some distance in the interior. Mr. Wakeman and Roxana were traveling in a kind of pioneer diligence, drawn by two horses, which are sometimes used in these countries. The other members of the party were all riding on horseback.

About three o'clock on the second day of their journey, they were surprised by a party of Indians who were lying in ambush for them. The first notice they had of the presence of the enemy, was from the discharge of a volley of arrows, by which every man in the company, riding on horseback, was more or less injured, a number of them fatally. They then surrounded the men, scalped and tomahawked every one of them, amidst horrible and unearthly shrieks and actions. Mr. Wakeman's horses were caught and held by a number of the savages, while others took hold of him, and forcibly drew him from the diligence, and, in the presence of Roxana, scalped and tomahawked him.

The horses were all secured by the savages, and having stripped the clothing from the murdered men, and secured every thing that struck their fancy, they departed, taking Roxana with them as a captive.

The state of her feelings at this crisis in her fortune,

FEEL CH-HIUE'S.



CAPTURE OF ROXANA AND THE DEATH OF HER FATHER.



can be better imagined than expressed. How terrible had been the change in her condition, which a few minutes had brought about! How fearfully fleeting is all earthly hope! The merry laugh and sprightly conversation of the company, had scarcely died away as it floated upon the passing breeze, ere death, in horrid form, had done his work, and herself taken prisoner by brutal savages, far away from even the possibility of relief. A scene so startling and tragical, was sufficient to paralyze with horror and despair the mind of the most reckless adventurer, let alone that of so young and tenderly reared a child as Roxana.

In the retreat, the savages would not even permit her to ride one of the horses they had stolen from her murdered parent; but, in the rapid march which, with savages, always takes place after a scene of this character, she was forced forward by a couple of them (one upon each side) at an unmerciful rate, during the remainder of that and a part of the next day.

About two o'clock on the afternoon of the second day, she became so exhausted with this (to her) unusual and severe labor, that she sunk down upon the ground, unable to progress another step. The savages observing this, called a halt, and after a few minutes' consultation, ordered up one of the horses, and placing her upon its back, proceeded on their journey—one of the savages leading the animal. In this way, late in the evening of the second day of her captivity, she reached the camp, or village, of the savages. On arriving at the village, she was passed over to the protecting care of a number

of the squaws, who summarily stripped from her her own clothes, and made her don the style of these female savages, which consisted of a short kind of frock, made of the skins of beasts, extending from the hips to the vicinity of the knees, and of most filthy and forbidding aspect. Before continuing the chain of our narrative further, the reader will indulge me in a brief digression.

At the time a portion of the thrilling incidents that I am now relating were taking place, I still resided in England, and there read the accounts of this massacre in the journals of the day. It was then supposed, and so published to the world, that Roxana had also been murdered by the savages—as no account had been obtained of her (although search and inquiry was made by the Company's agents) among the different tribes of Indians with whom the Company were in the habit of transacting business.

After I came to Oregon, and during the time I was in the employ of the Company, I frequently heard the facts connected with this catastrophe spoken of, and conversed with several persons who had been well acquainted with Mr. Wakeman, and that had also seen Roxana while with her father at Vancouver. They spoke of her form and beauty as being faultless, and in consequence of her sprightly conversation and wit, she became the centre of attraction to all those who had access to her company.

Although her remains were not recognized among those of the men subsequently found, and buried by the Company, yet it was conceded on all hands that she,

too, had been murdered by the savages. The reader can therefore judge of my surprise, when at the council I learned from her own lips who she was, and the tragical scenes of the two last years of her life—and in some sense will also account for the interest I felt in her behalf.

The nation in whose hands Roxana had fallen, she subsequently learned, was the Pischaus—a people that rank low, even amongst the other savages of this wild region of country. She remained with these degraded barbarians about six months, during which time she was forced to submit to the most cruel and loathsome bondage. The squaws seemed to take peculiar delight in inflicting upon her every annoyance and indignity that they could invent. They made her carry heavy burthens of wood, water, &c., daily; and if her motion was not rapid enough to please them, (which was seldom the case,) they would scourge her on the shoulders and legs with thongs made of dried buffalo hide, knotted at the ends. She informed me that frequently, from the scourgings, the blood would trickle from her shoulders to the ground. At other times, they bound her hand and foot, and then placed her on the outside of the tent, to remain during the night, upon the ground, scarcely able to move, exposed to all the vicissitudes of the elements, or what not.

Her food, during all the time she was with this tribe of savages, was of the most loathsome and offensive kind (although equal to that used by these people in general). It often consisted of a little meat, far gone

in a state of putrefaction ; and at other times, she would be supplied with a portion of the entrails of some animal that they had killed.

A favorite dish with these people (to which she was sometimes invited) consisted of a kind of hash made with berries, crickets, and bugs, pummeled and stewed up together, by means of a heated hole excavated in the ground. This, with many of the savage tribes, is not only regarded as a savory morsel of rarity, but also of great delicacy, and on account of the scarcity of the luxuries of which it is composed, is but seldom partaken of. These savages, like most of the other tribes that inhabit this country, as a general thing, prefer to eat their meat in a raw state, with as much filth adhering to it as possible.

After enduring almost everything that seems possible for humanity to put up with, for six months, Roxana was sold by the war chief of this tribe to a warrior of the "Walla Wallas." This warrior, on a friendly mission to the Pischau village, observed the pale-face squaw, (as he called her,) and determined to purchase and take her to his own hut to be his squaw. The chief and "Walla Walla" warrior soon struck upon a bargain, and Roxana was formally transferred to her new master, and conveyed by him upon his horse to his hut, some fifty or sixty miles distant. On arriving at the village, the warrior called on his chief to perform the marriage ceremony between himself and his pale-face squaw ; which, after the exhibition and expression of much curiosity by the inhabitants of the village at the

novelty (as they supposed) of the stranger, he proceeded to do. Understanding from the chief (principally by signs) what was about to take place, Roxana endeavored to break away from the clutches of the loathsome brute, but was firmly grasped by two other savages, and held as in a vice.

The chief then proceeded to explain to her the nature of the ceremony, by informing her that the warrior had bought her from the Pischau chief, and that, according to their customs, she was his property, and that therefore he had a right to dispose of her in any way that he saw proper; that, by becoming his squaw, she ought rather to esteem herself highly honored, and favored even above many of the squaws belonging to their own tribe.

At this awful juncture in her life, Roxana said she mentally prayed to the Supreme Being, if it was consistent with His will, to remove her from a state of degradation so ineffably bitter and loathsome to her—as death, in any form, no matter how revolting, would be to her infinitely preferable to it.

The ceremony, however, of which she understood but little, was gone through with by the chief, while she was firmly held by the two savages. She was then, for the time being, put in charge of the warrior's mother—a lusty and almost frightful looking squaw, considerably advanced in years. In less than an hour from the time the ceremony had been finished, she heard, at a little distance from the hut, a great amount of noise and uproar among the savages; and before she had time to

ascertain the cause, the savage to whom she had so unceremoniously been married a few minutes before, was carried by several others and laid upon the ground, in front of his hut, a bloody corpse.

Roxana subsequently learned from the mother of the dead warrior, that he had been put to death by a young warrior of the same tribe, to avenge the death of his brother, who had some time before, in a melee, been killed by her son. The young savage had for some time been seeking an opportunity of wreaking his vengeance upon his adversary, but hitherto without success. Learning what was going on upon this occasion, and naturally supposing that in the excitement and festivities of the occasion, he would be less upon his guard than ordinarily, he took advantage of an occasion that the warrior thought peculiarly propitious to his happiness, and, with the precaution and determination peculiar to the Indian character, stole upon him unobserved, and speedily terminated his earthly existence, by piercing him to the heart with his spear.

Upon learning these facts, Roxana thanked the Lord that, in His own good time and way, He had preserved her honor, by removing the cause of her greatest trouble, and forever severing the tie which, contrary to her consent, was sought to be fastened upon her by these degraded barbarians. She fully believed that her prayer had been heard and answered by the Almighty—not, it is true, in the way she expected it, but in that form which accorded with His infinite wisdom and benevolence. Although her condition still seemed forlorn and

beyond all human hope, yet she tried to believe that the grace of God would be sufficient for her in every hour of need.

Sometime during the night, the body of the dead savage was removed to another place, and the next day was buried according to their customs upon such occasions. She was surprised at the apparent little notice taken of this tragic scene by the other savages, and especially by the mother of the deceased ; for, instead of giving themselves up to sorrow and mourning, they seemed rather to make the occasion one of hilarity and rejoicing. The mother of the deceased exhibited no traces of sorrow whatever, and seemed to regard the occurrence as simply a link in the chain of passing events. She informed Roxana that transactions of that character were of frequent occurrence among their people—that where the life of a warrior had been taken by the hand of his fellow, their customs permitted a relative or friend of the deceased to take that of the slayer in turn.

Roxana continued to reside in the deceased warrior's hut with his mother, who, from the fact, no doubt, that she regarded her as the squaw of her late son, treated her better than she would otherwise have done. While with this tribe of Indians, however, she passed anything else than an inactive life ; for, besides assisting the old squaw in all her labors, she was frequently handed over by her to perform labor for others, in the most humiliating and degrading occupations

The moral, as well as physical grade of these savages, might be regarded as a little in advance of the Pischaus,

though it is scarcely possible to conceive of a state of humanity more thoroughly degraded and unhumanized. They were a little more tasty and tidy in their appearance than the former, and also appeared to be less cruel to their captives. But their filthy and revolting mode of cookery was about the same as that of the Pischaus. Roxana's food, while with these people, was but little, if any, preferable to what it was while with the Pischaus, and consisted of about the same variety.

Although, by the customs of these barbarians, she was the property, or, in other words, the slave of him who had bought and sought to make her his wife, yet, by a part of the same customs, upon the death of the warrior, the widow is perfectly free—not inheritable by his relatives, or any one else; and, in this particular, there is no difference made between those that are captives and those of their own nation.

A consideration is always paid to the father or near relatives of the young squaw whose hand is sought by a warrior as a companion. Widows, among this tribe of Indians, are not allowed to marry the second time, from the superstitious idea that the deceased warriors will have use for them in the next world; and that upon their death, they will take their appropriate places in the households of their defunct lords, at the new hunting-grounds.

Roxana had been with these savages now about nine months, during all of which time her sufferings, mentally and physically, had been intense—far beyond the power of any words that I can command; when, to her aston-

ishment and dismay, another change in her hard fortune seemed about to take place.

This nation of Indians and the Flat-Heads, as she afterwards learned, had for some time been on unfriendly terms, and had come together, on several occasions, in sanguinary combat, upon the field of battle. Better counsels at length having prevailed, the two nations agreed to a peace ; and in order to fortify each other's words with the necessary confidence—in accordance with the customs of most of these hostile tribes—they bound themselves, respectively, to deliver to each other a number of hostages, to be held by each of the contending parties during pleasure, as an additional guaranty of good behavior, respectively.

In selecting these hostages by the war chief, Roxana was taken as one of them, and, with others, marched off to where the council of the two nations was in session, and formally delivered over to the chief of the Flat-Heads.

The journey to this council (a distance of about fifty miles) almost killed her. Her system was so much exhausted, in consequence of extreme weakness, induced by traveling the whole distance on foot, that upon her arrival at the council, she was scarcely able to stand upon her feet ; and yet, on the morning after her arrival, she was again compelled to set out, in company with the Flat-Heads, on a long and wearisome journey—of the distance of which she had no idea.

She had not traveled far before her head became dizzy, and blindness impeded her further progress ; and faint,

and exhausted, she sank to the ground, unconscious of aught that was transpiring.

When sufficiently recovered to recognize what was passing, the savages had all collected around her, and were intently gazing upon her, supposing that, of a certainty, she was dead. By words and signs, she succeeded in convincing them that she was not able to travel on foot any farther, but if they would bring her a horse, she would ride.

After counseling together for a few minutes, one of the savages furnished her with a poor, jaded looking animal, (there being a number of good horses in the company,) and having assisted her upon its back, then took it by the head and led it. In this way, she traveled the greater part of the remaining distance to the village of the Flat-Heads. The last twenty or thirty miles, however, she was compelled to travel on foot, as the chivalrous savage who led her horse compelled her to dismount, and then rode the remainder of the way himself.

In consequence of this relief in making the journey, she felt much improved; yet, in accomplishing the last part of it, her condition was almost as forlorn as it was before; and it required the repose of several weeks to restore her health and strength to the point they occupied before setting out on this (to her) terrible journey.

The whole distance of this journey, she afterwards learned, was between one and two hundred miles; and the exposure of camping out of nights, and laying upon the bare ground, with nothing in the way of clothing to

protect her from the wet and cold, was not the least of her sufferings on this occasion.

The village to which she was taken, was only three days' journey from the foot of the Rocky Mountains, and was located on an elevated spot of ground, near a small and beautiful lake. The general contour of the country was mountainous and broken; but the valleys appeared to be fertile, and produced an abundant supply of grass, and a great variety of beautiful wild flowers.

On her arrival at the Flat-Head village, her color, features, &c., furnished an immense quantity of food for the gratification of the curiosity of these degraded people—but not much more, perhaps, than their flat heads and otherwise singular and brutal appearance did for hers.

These Indians, although possessing the general characteristics of most of the other tribes of this country, are, in many respects, their superiors. There is a kind of gentility and affability in their manners, and a mildness of disposition, that is by no means common to many of the other tribes.

On arriving at the village, Roxana was placed in the charge of an elderly squaw, who occupied one of the huts alone. This person was a widow, having lost her husband many years before, in one of their wars with the Black-Feet. She never had any children of her own, and since the death of her warrior, lived a retired life by herself. Her treatment of Roxana was, perhaps, as kind as she had any reason to expect from an individual as ignorant and degraded as she was. She allowed her but little idle time, however, for she

always had something for her to do. Collecting together and carrying wood and water, gathering berries and roots, and assisting her in making moccasins, constituted a part of her routine of labor.

The manner of preparing and using their food, was very much after the style of the other savages with whom she had lived. They subsisted chiefly on the flesh of animals, fish, berries, and roots.

Roxana regarded the males as excessively indolent, (except when engaged in the chase,) spending their time laying and loitering about, as though their lives were almost a burthen to them—the females, as is the case generally with all these tribes, doing all the work, and attending to the finances. Although the condition of the females is but little preferable to a state of abject slavery, yet they bear up under it with a remarkable degree of patience and contentment, but seldom giving loose rein to their feelings.

A peculiar trait in the character of the males of these savages is, that they seldom mistreat the females by overt acts of abuse of any kind whatever. Should a warrior so far forget his duty, as well as his dignity, as to strike his squaw, he is forever disgraced with his tribe, and there are none so degraded as to make him an associate; and his squaw is at once released from every obligation of the marriage contract, and is at liberty to leave his hut forever.

Notwithstanding the depression or flatness of the heads of these savages, (caused by the wearing, during infancy, upon the tops of their heads, flat boards, or

stones, with a smooth surface,) their intellects, Roxana thought, were as good as that of any of the savages with whom she had become acquainted.

It was now the fall of the year, and the warriors were preparing to go to the prairies, in order to spend three or four weeks in hunting buffalo. At these times it is customary with the warriors of this nation to take with them their women and children, for the double purpose of gratifying them with a kind of gala season, and also to attend to the cutting up and drying the meat that may be brought in by the hunters. This general hunt, which is sure to take place during every fall of the year, is regarded with delight by all ages and both sexes; and to the females and children is, no doubt, a season of recreation and amusement.

All things being ready, they started—the most of the hunters on horseback, and the women and children on foot. It is no part of the gallantry of these people to so far discommode themselves as to permit their squaws and papooses to ride, and themselves to travel on foot. This would not be regarded as comporting with the dignity of either their character or employment.

The hunters rode in advance, and the women, children and canines brought up the rear. The distance from the village to the hunting-ground was about thirty miles, and early in the afternoon of the second day of their journey they reached the desired point. Roxana was very much crippled up with the severity of the journey, though the squaws and children seemed to bear it without a murmur; and even those females who car-

ried their young papooses, bound upon their backs, the whole distance, seemed to suffer but little from fatigue.

Immediately upon arriving at the desired locality, all hands were busy in preparing the camp for future use and comfort. It was located on a beautifully rolling piece of ground, upon the bank of a small stream of running water, protected by a delightful grove of timber skirting the border of the prairie. Every thing having been arranged according to the taste and skill of the squaws, whilst the hunters were pursuing their game on the prairie, universal joy and hilarity seemed to take possession of all those left at the camp. The squaws hummed over their rude ditties, while the children rolled, tumbled, and leaped, in a way that would have excited the risibility of the most stubborn misanthrope.

They had been in camp about a week, and the labors of the hunters had, thus far, been crowned with unusual success. They had killed and brought to camp a number of buffaloes and other game, and joy seemed to pervade every countenance. But how transitory are the hopes even of the rude savage, whose wants and desires are certainly few, and easily satisfied !

About the hour of two o'clock of this night, when the camp-fires had all died out, and sleep, like a soothing anodyne, rested upon all, a deadly and indiscriminate slaughter was commenced upon the camp. The frightful yells of the enraged enemy, amidst their fearful work of blood and slaughter, was enough to strike terror to the stoutest heart, and almost congeal the blood, as it languidly coursed its way through the veins.

The destruction of life was general, sparing neither age nor sex in the impetuosity and fury of the charge. Whether any of this party of the Flat-Heads (with two exceptions) escaped this dreadful slaughter, Roxana never learned ; but from the scene of death and carnage presented in the camp on the next morning, she was of the opinion that, with the exception of herself and two of the squaws, every soul had been put to death.

In the haste and confusion of the charge, the savages had involuntarily passed by the tent in which Roxana and the two squaws were sleeping—having, as they supposed, murdered all. In afterwards passing about amongst the dead and mangled bodies, scalping and stripping them, they came upon them also, and were much surprised (judging from their actions) that they had escaped the common destruction.

Their thirst for blood having by this time been somewhat appeased, they made use of no demonstrations of violence towards them, further than ordering them in the charge of two gigantic savages of most sinister aspect.

During the progress of this bloody scene, Roxana and her two companions would have made an effort at escape, had they seen any possibility of effecting it ; but such appeared to be the number of the enemy, from the noise and confusion they created, they supposed the attempt would prove utterly futile, and that they might as well calmly await their fate where they then were.

These strange savages, who, as yet, they knew nothing about, continued in the camp till sometime after day-

light; and in passing about in the care of the two savages who had them in charge, Roxana and the two squaws had a full view of the melancholy picture before them, frightful and ghastly in the extreme. Men, women, and children, horribly mutilated and covered with gore, were strewed over the ground, in every form and attitude of horror. Such was the impression made upon Roxana's mind by this exhibition of cruelty and death, that it ever remained fresh in her mind, and seemed to glow before her eyes with all the reality that tortured her senses on the morning that she witnessed it.

After having secured the horses and everything else that belonged either to the camp or persons of the Flat-Heads, they set off for their own country.

Up to this time, Roxana had been with the Flat-Heads seven months; and although her condition had been far from pleasant or agreeable, upon the whole, she had been better used by them than by either of the other tribes into whose hands she had fallen; and at this time her feelings could not be otherwise than most gloomy upon so sudden and tragic a change in her history. Not only from the cruelties perpetrated upon this occasion, but from the physiognomy and manners of her captors, she was led to believe them a very base and treacherous tribe of savages.

Before leaving the camp, the two Flat-Head squaws were mounted upon horses, and each one of them being taken in charge by a lusty savage, set out on their journey at a brisk pace. What subsequently became of them, Roxana never learned, as the company of sav-

ages here separated, forming two parties, the one that the two squaws were with taking one direction, and the one that Roxana was with taking another.

Roxana was also mounted upon a horse and taken charge of by a fiendish-looking savage, who, from his accoutrements, she supposed was a chief, and whose very appearance caused her to shudder. Her horse was urged along by them at a rate which was exceedingly unpleasant and fatiguing to her.

While thus passing along, to her horror and dismay, the loathsome savage in whose charge she had been placed, sought, on divers occasions, to use familiar liberties with her person, to the great merriment and satisfaction of the others. Thus far, amidst all the calamities that she had passed through since she had become a captive to the savages, she had, in this respect, been shielded from insult ; and upon this occasion, so great was her humiliation and depression of spirit, that she humbly besought the Lord that, rather than she should be thus humiliated, he would remove her hence by any means of His providence that might in His sight seem good. But, for reasons which no doubt were founded in wisdom, and in harmony with His providence, He suffered her soul to pass through this terrible infliction ; and during the two months that she was with these brutal savages, she became a prey (notwithstanding her prayers and resistance to the contrary) to the diabolical passions and caprice of the inhuman wretch who had usurped power over her.

All her hopes, pride, and desire for life forsook her ;

and, had it not been for the conscious wickedness of the act, she would, on divers occasions, have ended her sorrows by destroying herself, as the only adequate remedy to soothe the bitterness of a state of degradation which, to her, seemed insupportable. Her mind became a prey to itself; and, though conscious of no guilt, either in thought, word, or deed, yet her heart and mind united in the declaration that the beautiful goddess of innocence and purity of thought had taken her flight, and left her a prey to the unrelenting buffettings of a most cruel fortune. Why should she now desire to return to her home in England in order once more to embrace her dear mother and sisters? Would not the ever-conscious sense of her own shame and degradation the more keenly torment her? Or, in her own language, "Oh, Death, propitiously smile upon my lost and forlorn condition, and speedily sever the cord that binds me to an existence that has lost all that is pleasant, agreeable or desirable, and let the record of my life remain a blank during all time to come."

Hitherto, during her captivity among the savages, her heart had been constantly buoyed up in the midst of all her afflictions, with a consciousness that there was another besides the loving hearts of her mother, sisters, and numerous kind friends, that would sacrifice all its hopes and prospects in this world for her recovery and preservation, had it only a hint that she was yet alive among the savages of Oregon.

Charles Goodhue, the son of a wealthy merchant of London, had, for some time previous to Roxana's leav-

ing London, been paying his addresses to her, and their marriage was to have taken place on her return home. Roxana informed me that he was a young man of a noble, honorable mind, upon whom her young and ardent affections were centred, and with whom all that she desired or expected to enjoy in this world was invested. Using her own language: "Well do I remember his last words to me, and the ardent pressure of my hand, as he bid me farewell on board the ship, a few minutes before we sailed for Oregon."

Thus far she had lived in hopes that, by some means unknown to herself, Providence would effect her release from the savages, and enable her again to return to her friends in England. But now, not only were her hopes blasted forever, but even the desire for such an event perished in her bosom. Could the change have taken place by a single volition of the will, she informed me that she would be loth to make it. "For," said she, "what would be my condition on returning home? Could I look Charles in the face without a blush, or a feeling of conscious shame? Never, never! Rather than bear the weight of a sense of this crushing debasement, I would rather, a thousand times, perish in the wilderness, and be forgotten forever."

Upon arriving at the village of their savage captors, she was taken to the hut of him who had her in charge, and forced, at the risk of her life, there to remain, under the strictest surveillance of two of his squaws, whose disposition would have cast dishonor upon that of the enraged tiger of the jungle.

She endured, at the hands of these savages, every species of cruelty and degradation that they could heap upon her, and to a heart that was already well nigh broken, their cruelties added despair ; and so frantic did she become with the accumulation of misery, that, had not Providence, at this time, seen proper to change her condition, death must, in a very short time, have closed her mortal career.

At this time, after she had been with the Crow Indians about two months, the village was unexpectedly attacked by a party of Black-Feet, (their old enemies,) and the greater part of its inhabitants put to death—either on the spot, or afterwards as prisoners of war. The chief and the two squaws, who were her principal tormentors, were killed and scalped by the Black-Feet, and Roxana was only saved by elevating her hands in an attitude of supplication, and giving them to understand, by signs, that she had been a prisoner to the Crows. In company with ten other prisoners, taken at the same time, she was marched off to the country of the Black-Feet.

Of all the tribes with whom she had yet become acquainted, she found the Crows the most cruel and degraded—being, in point of intelligence, or in any other respect, but little above the grade of the brute creation. Numbers of them, of both sexes, wear nothing whatever in the way of clothing, during the warm weather ; and the only thing in the shape of a garment worn by any of them, during the summer months, is a cloth made of skins, and tightly drawn around the loins. Their food

is in character with every thing else—filthy and disgusting in the extreme.

Unfortunately, it so happened, that shortly after the Flat-Heads had arrived at the prairies, for the purpose of hunting, this party of Crow Indians (having crossed the mountains) approached the same prairies, for the same purpose. Discovering that they had been preceded by the Flat-Heads, with whom they were on ill terms, unperceived and unexpected by the latter, they kept themselves secreted until a late hour in the night, and then, taking advantage of the darkness, and the soundness of their slumbers, like enraged tigers, fell upon and destroyed them.

I have now given the reader, in substance, a few of the principal facts, as related to me by Roxana, touching her visit to Oregon, her subsequent capture, and treatment by the Indians. In the relation of these tragic scenes, in a few instances, I have given them in her own words; and although the account is far from being as full as that given by her to me at different times, yet it contains the most prominent facts in her thrilling narrative—which, upon my mind, made a deep and lasting impression.

Having been taken prisoner by the party of Black-Feet, as related by her, the reader is already familiar with the proceedings of the council that was called together to try the prisoners, and its final results.

CHAPTER VIII.

IT was now the first of July, 1803, and notwithstanding the care and attention that both myself and *Ke-Ka* had bestowed upon Roxana, her health seemed to be exceedingly delicate, and if there was any change for the better, it was slight indeed. She was evidently laboring under great physical exhaustion and depression of spirits, which, in the absence of some adequate remedy, must, sooner or later, prove fatal to her.

When at home, I always made it a point to put on a cheerful countenance, and, through the medium of conversation, act upon her spirits, and thus arouse her from that unfortunate state of mind into which she had fallen. Sometimes this plan seemed to succeed well, and, for a time, she would appear quite cheerful; but, ere long, would again relapse into her former melancholy habit.

I still had great hopes, however, of her recovery, and that she would again be enabled to return to her family and friends in England; but these considerations (which to me were worthy of almost every sacrifice) seemed to give her no pleasure.

Ke-Ka had become very much attached to her, and was willing to do any thing in the world for her, that she could do; and, in consequence of her unremitting

attentions and uniform kindness, Roxana was very affectionately disposed toward her. By way of rallying her, I used frequently to tell her that her health would soon be sufficiently restored for me to start with her to Vancouver, that she might again return to England. Upon these occasions she would say to me, that so far as the same would be a gratification to me, she desired it would be so ; but as for herself, she was of opinion that the future had in reserve for her a very different banquet.

It was a source of sorrow to me that I could not spend more of my time at home than thus far I had been able to do ; but, under the circumstances, it was impossible, as our supplies had to be kept up mainly through our success in the chase, which, of itself consumed a considerable portion of our time ; and in addition to this, I had to hold myself in readiness for any emergency that might transpire in the nation, whether it was in the form of an expedition in order to chastise some of the neighboring nations, or to engage in the destruction of bears, or some other species of animal, that had proved more than a match for the savages.

My name, fame, and exploits had by this time become familiar throughout the nation, and hundreds of those ignorant people, from remote parts of the country, had visited our village on purpose to see *Wapsa-Kiwan*, “the bear-slayer.”

Upon these occasions, they would manifest the greatest regard and admiration for me, of which it was possible for them to evince, and almost uniformly bestow

upon me some presents, in the form of skins, moccasins, or venison.

Such had become my popularity with them, that upon appearing amongst them at any of their villages, I was treated with the most distinguished respect, and at once formed the central object of all eyes and attention. This (to me) favorable state of things had mainly been brought about by the zeal and readiness with which, upon all occasions, I entered into their plans and enterprises—thereby convincing them that I was indeed their friend. In this way having obtained their friendship and confidence, their admiration of me seemed to know no bounds.

As the great object of my solicitude was now Roxana, and as it was uncertain how long we would be compelled to remain amongst them, I regarded it as a matter of the utmost moment to us both to still cultivate their friendship and cherish their confidence.

At this time, word was brought to the village that, while a party of our nation was hunting buffalo on the prairies, they had been attacked, and several of their number killed, by a numerous party of the Snake tribe; and, also, that several of them had been taken prisoners by the enemy; and requesting immediate help, not only in order to rescue the prisoners, but to punish, in an exemplary manner, this outrage upon the rights and dignity of a neighboring nation.

The place of rendezvous was to be about thirty miles from our village, and was to take place on the evening of the next day. Upon receiving this important infor-

mation, Hohoako-Kiwa, the chief, convened the warriors of the village, and, in form of a brief speech, informed them of these facts, and that early in the morning he would expect them to be ready to start for the point designated.

Of course, in an enterprise so important as this, I was expected to constitute one of its number, and with my rifle carry terror and consternation (if nothing else) into the ranks of the enemy. Hohoako-Kiwa had some time before procured for me (to be worn on these occasions) a military hat, in form of a gigantic arch of feathers, in size, form, and splendor not much inferior to his own. In the morning, after the process of painting had been gone through with, and we were ready to mount our horses and be off for the rendezvous, the chief brought it to me and requested me to put it on; which, in order to gratify him, I did. This occasioned considerable amusement to the party, and they congratulated me (in their uncouth way) upon my fine appearance, in full costume of a Black-Foot warrior.

At a signal from the chief, every man mounted his horse, and, amidst an uproar of wild shrieks, indicative of war, started off at full speed. At about 3 o'clock in the afternoon we arrived at the place of rendezvous, and found a considerable number of warriors already collected in advance of us; and during the remaining portion of the afternoon and evening, they continued to pour in, until the number collected together was a little over five hundred.

The fore part of the night was occupied by a grand

council of the chiefs and warriors, and a plan of the campaign was agreed upon, which was essentially as follows :

The party was to move, with all possible haste, early in the morning, to the margin of the prairie, where the attack of the Snakes had been made, and then, for the time being, remain in camp. Six of their most experienced spies were to be then sent out, in search of the trail of the retreating Snakes. In case they came upon the trail, one of their number was to be sent back to the camp, to notify the party of the fact ; when, under conduct of this spy, it was immediately to set out, and, at a convenient distance, move forward in the wake of the spies. The better to enable the party to move forward in the line of the spies, they were occasionally to drop in their path, as they passed along, bits of green leaves. Should the spies come in view of the enemy, they were immediately to send back another one of their number, in order to notify the advancing party of the fact, and the other spies were still to keep up their observations, until the enemy either called a halt or camped for the night ; in which case further notice was to be given to the party, in order to enable it to prepare for the attack.

In pursuance to this plan, the party moved forward in the morning, and about one o'clock camped on the margin of the prairie, as agreed upon. The spies were then sent out, and about three o'clock one of them returned with the information that the trail had been found ; when, in perfect silence, the party commenced moving forward.

As the Snakes had more than two days the start of us, I had but little idea of overtaking them, knowing with what rapidity those savages generally move off, after committing depredations of this kind, in order to avoid expected vengeance.

It being late in the afternoon when we set out in pursuit, of course we made but little advance this day. We pitched our camp about dusk, in the midst of a clump of trees, and after partaking of a little dried meat, dropped down upon the ground for a night's rest. At the dawn of day we were again in motion, and found no difficulty in following the trail of the spies, and regulating our motion to suit theirs, although never in sight of them ; for, from the appearance of the bits of green leaves which the spies occasionally pulled off and dropped on the ground, the Indians could tell to within a few minutes the number of hours the spies were in advance of us ; and as they wished to keep the distance of about two hours (of their time) between them, they were by this means enabled to adjust the motion of the party accordingly.

During this day we marched about forty miles, and camped for the night on the bank of a small, muddy stream of water, where we found plenty of grass for our horses. As yet, we had received no tidings from the spies.

On this, the third day of our pursuit, we were again early in motion, and advanced at about the same rate of speed that we did on the day previous ; and, without any word from the spies, camped for the night, weary and tired—at least so far as I was concerned.

By this time, I began to feel somewhat discouraged with the prospects of our undertaking, but Hohoako-Kiwa was sanguine that on the next (the fourth day of the pursuit) we would obtain some favorable tidings from the spies, as, he said, he had not expected from the beginning to hear from them sooner.

On the morning of the fourth day, about the usual time, we again set out, and, about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, were hailed by one of the spies, who informed us that they had obtained sight of the party of Snakes; that they were very numerous, and were still moving forward; and that the other spies would keep them in view till they camped for the night, when other runners would be sent in, to notify us of the fact, in due time.

It was a matter of surprise to me, that, although we had thus far been traveling on the trail of the Snakes, we had, as yet, come upon none of their places of encampment for the nights that they had necessarily spent on the way. Upon mentioning this to Hohoako-Kiwa, he informed me that this was by no means strange, as, in making a retreat of this kind, in order to avoid an attack after night, these people neither reposed in camp nor kindled fires, and that, unless from the litter of their horses, no indication of an encampment was apt to be left behind them; that, from appearances, this party had been unusually careful to obliterate every thing in their progress that was calculated to direct the attention of an enemy in their pursuit.

Continuing our progress till evening, and having heard nothing farther from the spies, we again pitched

our camp ; but had scarcely got things to rights before our attention was called by the return of the spies. They reported the Snakes about ten miles in advance of us, encamped on the summit of a small hillock, enveloped in a growth of young timber.

They had, by this time, reached the territory of their own country, and, finding themselves so far from the scene of their mischief, felt safe, no doubt, from the inroads of the Black-Feet. But, on this, as well as on preceding occasions, they greatly mistook the character of the enemy with whom they had to deal. Having obtained from the spies the locality of the ground upon which the enemy was encamped, and such other information as was deemed important, it was then determined by the chiefs, in council, to divide their force into four commands, and, at about the hour of midnight, move upon the enemy, and under cover of the darkness, and while they were unsuspectingly reposing in sleep, avenge themselves at the least possible risk.

But it is said that almost every question presents at least two sides for disputation, and so we found it on this occasion ; for, notwithstanding the secrecy and caution with which we moved forward and approached the enemy's quarters, we were detected by an outside sentinel, while yet a considerable distance from their camp, and the alarm given. In obedience to the orders given, (upon a contingency of this kind,) our whole force, in the form of a circle, immediately rushed forward with great impetuosity for the centre of the enemy's camp, for the double purpose of preventing them from making

their escape, and at the same time striking an effective blow before they had time to recover from the effects of the surprise into which they had evidently been thrown.

What a few moments before had seemed the trifling work of but a moment, had now enlarged itself into fearful proportions to be contended for. We had no time now, however, to count upon probabilities, even if we had had the disposition.

The enemy, seeing themselves surrounded by a superior force to their own, were determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible, and accordingly commenced a raking fire upon us with their arrows, while we were yet in the act of advancing upon them ; which was returned in good earnest by a similar charge from our side ; and in a moment thereafter the contending elements were in close combat, using their spears and tomahawks in a way that was not calculated to impress the disinterested beholder that there was much of the milk of human kindness in the nature of these savage tribes.

At the request of Hohoako-Kiwa, I took my position by his side. And, for him, it was well that I did so ; for otherwise he would never have left the field of combat alive. He had already received several slight wounds from the enemy's spears, when a gigantic savage of the Snakes struck him from behind with a ponderous war-club, which brought him to the ground, and while in the act of repeating the blow, I shot him dead on the spot. During the remainder of the contest, my knife did good service, and was the means on several occasions of saving my life.

The battle lasted about twenty-five minutes, during which time we lost, in killed, twenty warriors, and in wounded, over one hundred. Of the enemy, there were killed fifty-seven, and we took twenty-six of them prisoners of war. During the progress of the battle, a number of the enemy broke through our lines and made their escape, but as to what proportion of them, we could not ascertain.

While the contest was progressing, I received a slight wound, in my left arm, from one of the enemy's spears, which, though somewhat painful, was of but little inconvenience to me.

When Hohoako-Kiwa had sufficiently recovered from the stunning effects of the blow he had received, he expressed many thanks to me for the service I had rendered him at so critical a juncture in his fortune.

We remained in possession of the camp all night, and in the morning were surprised to find the prisoners that the enemy had taken from our nation nowhere amongst us. Upon farther examination among the dead, we found their bodies, shockingly mangled—almost hewed to pieces with the tomahawks of the enemy. Finding themselves attacked with but little prospect of making good their escape, they had put the prisoners to death, in order to prevent them from falling into the hands of their friends.

The scene presented on the field of battle, when daylight again opened upon us, was, to me, most shocking. Scores of savages, in their gore, lay stretched upon the ground, in every direction; while many of the wounded

and disabled, with gaping gashes, were writhing under the pain they were enduring.

A portion of the day was spent in scalping and stripping the dead of the enemy, and in suitably burying our own dead. This last rite was performed by digging, with their tomahawks, a hole in the ground, of considerable extent in circumference, and then laying, in tiers, the bodies, together with their bows and arrows, spears, tomahawks, &c.; then covering them up with dirt, stones, and branches.

During the interment, one of the chiefs officiated in a kind of funeral service, expatiating on the valor and virtues of the dead, and propitiating the Great Spirit of their nation, to supply them with plenty of game when they arrived at the great hunting-ground for which they had taken their departure. Although to an enlightened mind this ceremony would appear the extreme of nonsense, yet the solemnity with which it was characterized invested it with much impressiveness.

The afternoon was now far advanced, and, lest we might be attacked by a reinforcement from the enemy, it was thought best not to remain in our present position over another night. The horses (as well those of the enemy as our own) were brought up, and having secured the plunder, and mounted the wounded, we set out on our journey home. The prisoners, in charge of a competent guard, were marched in advance of the party, with their arms pinioned behind their backs. In this way we proceeded until about 10 o'clock at night, when we struck our camp; and, having posted a

sufficient guard to detect the approach of an enemy, coiled ourselves down, and were soon asleep.

Perhaps, by this time, the reader is ready to condemn the motives by which I was actuated in taking part in this sanguinary affair of savage life. If so, I frankly confess that I can't help it. My mission among the savages was neither in the capacity of a missionary nor reformer. In the same way that politicians and theologians sometimes do, I made the doctrine of expediency the scape-goat of what otherwise and under different circumstances would have appeared inconsistent with high-toned, manly principle. I had laid down the axiom that, in my present circumstances, it was a duty that I owed Roxana and myself, at all hazards, to conciliate the favor of the savages with whom our lot was cast. The part I took in this transaction was as moderate as consistency with my former *professed* interest with their welfare, and maintenance of their confidence, would admit.

So far as the two contending nations of savages were concerned, I regarded them as alike base, barbarous, and inhuman ; and, unconnected with Roxana's and my own welfare, cared but little as to the result of this or any other foray, which the Black-Feet might have with neighboring tribes. It is true that my heart was touched with pity toward the poor, ignorant prisoners, taken upon this, as well as upon other occasions ; and could I, in any sense, have ameliorated their condition, I should gladly have done so ; but, at all events, they were only suffering the penalties of the barbarous cus-

toms which themselves contributed to establish and maintain, and the effects of which they delighted to see carried out upon others ; and, upon this occasion, these prisoners had simply taken the place of those of the Black-Feet whom they had in charge the day before.

It may be said that, in consequence of the ignorance and degradation of these people, they should not, in any sense, be held responsible for their conduct. Like some other doctrines taught in the world, this may do as a fine-spun theory ; but when viewed in the light of a practicable fact, is found void of truth. The greater proportion of ignorance, superstition, and barbarity in the world—even with the most degraded heathen nations—is voluntary and self-inflicted ; and, so far at least as this life is concerned, they are held to a strict accountability for their conduct, to that law of retribution which saith, “He that taketh the sword, shall perish by the sword,” and, “With what measure ye mete out to others, the same shall be meted to you again.” In this respect there is no difference between the most enlightened and degraded people : conduct alone determines the question, regardless of means of knowledge. As demonstrative of this fact, how terribly is the truth vindicated in the case of these ignorant savages !

It is possible that, after what I have endured at the hands of these people, in connection with what I have seen, I am not an impartial judge ; but, still, I am firmly of the opinion that, with all their ignorance and degradation, their knowledge is much better than their practice.

The next morning, by the time the sun was tinging the eastern horizon with his ruddy mantle, we were on our journey, and without encountering any casualty worthy of note, on the evening of the fourth day of our homeward march, landed at the village ; and I was gratified to find Roxana no worse.

As usual upon those occasions, she seemed very glad of my safe return, and informed me that during my absence she had been very uneasy for my safety—knowing the dangers that uniformly follow these hostile adventures.

Her sympathies were very much moved in behalf of the prisoners that we had brought with us, and she requested me to interfere in their behalf, and, if possible, procure their release. I informed her that this was impossible, as the mere suggestion of such an idea to the council would cause them to look upon me with suspicion ; as these prisoners were regarded as their deadly enemies, and had been taken in battle ; and as that, according to the code of laws of these people, any sentence (in cases of this kind) less than that of ignominious death, would not only bring upon them the wrath of their ancestors, but the displeasure of the Great Spirit of their nation.

The next step in the programme of this expedition was the council, which, in the course of a week, was called to pass upon the deserts of the prisoners. It assembled near the village to which the party belonged who had been attacked by the enemy on the prairies, and to which place, also, the prisoners had been conducted. This village was fifty miles from our own.

When the day for setting out for the council arrived, I urged indisposition as an excuse for remaining at home; and although Hohoako-Kiwa and a number of others were very anxious that I should attend, and participate in the enjoyments of the occasion, yet, in deference to me, on account of my distemper, with which they supposed I was possessed, they suffered me to remain behind.

They were absent on this mission over a week; and when they returned home, they seemed much rejoiced to find that my distemper had in a great measure left me. Hohoako-Kiwa gave me a thrilling account of the proceedings of the council, and the horrid scenes of barbarity that ensued. Five days were occupied in putting to death the prisoners, by burning them at the stake, after first scalping and otherwise tormenting them.

Upon hearing this recital of cruelty, I was thankful that my feelings had been spared the contemplation of scenes so shocking and brutal.

For some time after these events, our attention was not engrossed by any adventure of moment, except the ordinary routine of hunting and fishing, by means of which our supplies were kept up from time to time.

These people appear to be entirely ignorant of vegetable productions, as nothing of the kind is cultivated by them. The squaws sometimes gather berries, and a species of esculent root, of spontaneous production, which they stew together in connection with dried buffalo beef, and is regarded by them as being very good, and something of a rarity.

As occasion served, I gathered such wild fruits for Roxana as I thought would be agreeable to her taste, some of which she relished very much.

The third winter since my captivity had now set in, and unlike the one preceding it, bid fair to be a very severe one. The snow had already fallen to a considerable depth, and it was intensely cold. I had laid in during the fall a plentiful supply of meat for the winter, but many of the Indians of the village, with that improvidence which seems to be a part of their very existence, were upon the point of absolute want, and, as was their custom in exigencies of this kind, looked to me for their daily supplies, and it would have been futile on my part to have attempted to turn them away empty.

Ever since my arrival among them, I had been trying to impress upon their minds the importance of laying in during the fall of the year a sufficient supply to carry them through that portion of the winter, at least, that would not admit of hunting. But upon no account could I induce them to change their habits in this respect. It is true that some of these savages are more provident than others; but it is nevertheless a trait of character which, to a very great extent, applies to them all.

During this, as well as the first winter of my captivity, there was much suffering for the want of food in our village; but from the assistance I was enabled from time to time to give them, from the supply that I had laid in, as well as in the way of hunting, when the state

of the weather would admit of it, they finally reached spring, without any deaths from starvation, though many of them were gaunt as hungry wolves.

Roxana's health, during this winter, seemed sensibly to have improved, and when the fine weather of spring set in, she was able to walk out a little ; which she had not before done since her arrival at the village. My hopes were inspired with the belief that she was about to recover from the almost hopeless condition to which she had been reduced by the treatment she had received from the savages ; and, perhaps, before we were overtaken by another winter, we would be enabled to make our escape, and reach some one of the stations of the "Hudson Bay Company." But before so bold an enterprise could with safety be ventured, her strength would have to essentially improve from what it even then was. The journey would unquestionably be a hard and trying one, for even the best constitution ; and what could be expected, in an enterprise of this kind, from a delicate female, laboring to a serious extent under disease ? It would certainly have been madness and presumption, while in this state of health, to have attempted it.

The plan that I had fixed upon in my own mind, for the accomplishment of this enterprise, was the following : During one of our hunting excursions—at which times all our young warriors are absent from the village, engaged in the chase—I would feign some excuse to return to the village, and thereby obtain leave of absence for two or three days, taking with me the horse I was

in the habit of riding. Arriving at the village late in the night, and having procured a second horse for Roxana to ride, unobserved by the remaining villagers, set off on our way. I thought it probable that, in this way, we could at least obtain two or three days the start of them, before they would have any knowledge of the game I was playing off upon them, and by that time we would be so far in advance of them that it would not be probable they would overtake us.

But, as the reader will see in the sequel, this beautiful plan, which had cost me so much severe reflection, proved to be a mere chimera of the brain, that never assumed practical form, so far as Roxana was concerned.

The spring and summer of this year (1804) passed away without the occurrence of any event of particular notoriety. About the usual amount of time was spent in hunting, and the remainder in idleness about the village.

Early in the fall of this year, news was brought to our village that a party of thirty or forty pale-face warriors had been seen, about two weeks previous, passing up the Missouri river in boats.* This news was a source of no little wonder and anxiety to me. Who could they have been?—where were they

* It is probable the incident here alluded to by Mr. Dixon, was that of Lewis and Clark, in their exploring expedition to the mouth of the Columbia river, as, I believe, it was during this year that they passed over this region of country.—ED.

from?—and what could have been their business? were questions that frequently occurred to my mind, but which I could not answer.

I informed Roxana of the fact, and so keenly were both of our feelings touched with the idea that Europeans had passed within our vicinity, that we both involuntarily shed tears—not of sorrow, nor yet of joy, but from a kind of commingling of both, in connection with the thoughts of our past, present, and future. I would have given the world (had it been mine) to have met this party of men on the river, or to have known in time of their passing by. We finally settled down in the belief that this party had been sent out by the Hudson Bay Company, in search of Roxana, and after a fruitless attempt were probably returning home. These thoughts worried and perplexed us both, and were a source of misery to us. Like the individual cast away at sea, who has for a long time been clinging to a frail piece of plank as the only alternative between him and a watery grave, with what joy does he hail the appearance of a ship in the distance! and, as she approaches, how he exerts himself to attract the attention of those on board! but, unobserved by any one, she passes heedlessly by! How his heart now sinks within him, and how much more terrible is the gloom that envelops him than it was before!

To a certain extent, this was our condition upon this occasion. We imagined to ourselves with what ease we could have been removed hence, if we only had known

of the visit of this party! But, alas! it was now too late.

But we had seen too many of the vicissitudes of this life, to be long cast down by thoughts of this kind, and soon assumed our usual courage and cheerfulness.

In the month of October, a deputation was sent to me from another village, (about fifty miles distant,) requesting my aid in the destruction of two brown bears, that had recently destroyed one of their warriors, while hunting in the mountains. In company with Hohoako-Kiwa and three warriors of our village, I set out for the point designated, and about 3 o'clock on the second day arrived at the village, and found the inhabitants, as usual on those occasions, greatly terror-stricken at the audacity of the enemy. These bears were supposed to inhabit a ledge of rocks in one of the gorges of the mountain, about seven miles distant from the village.

On the following morning, in company with about twenty of the warriors, I set out for the mountains, in search of those disturbers of the good order and peace of society. Calling a halt in the vicinity of the mountains where the enemy was supposed to be, (from the known cowardice of these people, from the fear of those animals,) I requested them all, with the exception of one guide, to remain where they then were, until I, in company with the guide, would go up the mountain and make observations. This they readily consented to do, and the guide and myself slipped along the brow of one of the bluffs, with great caution, peering down the rocks, in the meantime, to the bottom below.

FIVE YEARS A CAPTIVE

Whilst thus intently gazing on the scene beneath, our eyes fell upon two monster brown bears, laying in the sun at the head of the gorge, apparently asleep, while two cubs were playing over them—performing a great variety of antics. From the point of our observation the bank was about fifty feet high, and nearly perpendicular; and the bears were almost directly under us.

Our position was unfavorable to an unerring shot, and yet the temptation was far too great to forego a chance so inviting. I drew up my rifle, and took deliberate aim for the butt of the ear of the one at the greatest angle from where I stood. At the crack of my rifle, what was my astonishment on beholding the Indian guide, who had been standing on a boulder on the brow of the bluff, by my side, with the rapidity of lightning descending the ledge of rocks, to the bottom of the gorge where the bears were. He had scarcely struck the bottom before he was seized by both of them, and almost instantly torn to pieces. While in the act of reloading my gun, I distinctly heard the craunching of his bones by the enraged animals. In my haste, I had missed the object of my solicitude, which under the circumstances was perplexing in the extreme. I determined this time to use more precaution than I had before done; and having made what I supposed to be a proper allowance for the rise of the ball in shooting on so descending a scale as this was, I again discharged my rifle at the curly pate of the same animal; and this time had the satisfaction of seeing it drop to the

ground, and after a few violent struggles, give up the ghost. My ball had made a terrible incision in its skull, and caused its brains to flow profusely. The other bear, although suspicious that all was not right at this point in the contest, made no attempt to evade what might yet be in reserve, and still continued its aggressions upon the body of the dead Indian. My position was such that, without more sagacity than these animals seemed to possess, I was beyond its vision.

Having again loaded my gun, I aimed, as before, for the brain-pan of the survivor of these desperate animals; and, although I shattered its head in a shocking manner—almost entirely carrying away the whole top of the skull with the force of the ball—yet it run, before it fell, about fifty yards, in directly an opposite course from its den.

At the first discharge of my gun, the cubs, well nigh frightened out of their senses, had made their escape to the den, where we left them, on account of the impracticability of coming at them.

Of the three carcasses that now lay in proximity, the most frightful one was that of the guide. The flesh had been torn from his bones, not only by mouthfuls, but by sections, and nearly every bone in his body had been crushed.

By what process he had been sent to the bottom of the gorge upon the discharge of my rifle, I never could tell, unless the jar caused by the explosion had set the boulder upon which he was standing in motion, thereby precipitating him down the ledge of rocks to the bottom.

Having notified the Indians of what had transpired, they all accompanied me to the scene of death, and notwithstanding the sight of the mangled remains of their companion, seemed greatly rejoiced at my success in destroying an enemy so much dreaded by them. Indeed, such was their joy on this occasion, that they took very little notice of the casualty which had resulted in the death of the guide, and were much more intent in their bestowal of thanks upon me, whom they regarded in the light of a great benefactor, than they were in their duties toward the dead.

Dispossessing the two bears of their comfortable robes, and collecting together the fragments of the dead Indian, we returned to the village, where we were greeted with the usual demonstrations of joy and respect by the inhabitants. The next day, the remains of the guide were taken a short distance from the village, and interred according to custom. After this we remained with them (at their urgent request) another day; at the end of which time they reluctantly suffered us to return to our village.

On arriving at home, with much regret I learned from Roxana that her health was not so good as it had been before I left. She had by some means, although ignorant of the cause, taken cold; and, added to her other difficulties, she was very much annoyed by a hacking cough. Her strength was much exhausted, and it was with difficulty that she could walk at all. In consequence of this discouragement, I almost despaired of ever seeing her restored to her wonted health. The

conclusion began to force itself upon me, that the "fell destroyer, consumption," had marked her for its own, as her symptoms more and more indicated every day. During the last spring and summer, her health seemed to improve, and my hopes and expectations in her behalf run high; but early in September she began a gradual decline, and now her case seemed more hopeless than I had ever witnessed it.

From the time of her arrival at our village, in one respect, my mind had gone under no change touching her case: I still felt determined to stand by, protect, and sustain her to the last—even though in doing so I should sacrifice my own life. For should I do otherwise, I felt that my conscience would forever condemn me, and that I should lose that respect for my own manly principle, which thus far in my life had been a solace to me.

During the whole of the following winter, there was but little change in her condition for the better, and I was absent from home just as little as possible—for I found that my (*assumed*) habitual cheerfulness and disposition to talk, tended very much to keep her from desponding, thereby promoting her comfort very essentially. Although Ke-Ka was kind to her, and ready to do any thing in her power to promote her happiness, yet she was no society for her.

As warm weather began to return in the spring, her health gradually improved, and during the fine summer weather of this year, (1805,) she so far recovered as to

be able to go out a little, and my hopes for her recovery again became buoyant.

On a certain occasion during the spring of this year, she told me it would be a gratification to her, if she could be provided with the necessary implements to write a little, at the same time adding "that she supposed nothing in the way of paper and ink could be procured in this country."

After a little reflection, I informed her that I thought I could furnish her with a substitute that would answer her purpose. What her object was in making this suggestion, I did not then know, nor did I think it would be prudent in me to inquire.

I procured a couple of otter-skins, and after submitting them to a process of dressing, by means of which I produced upon them a smooth, compact surface, I gave them to her, with the remark that I thought she would find them an excellent substitute for paper. At the same time, I gave her a species of ink, expressed from the root of a plant that is indigenous to the soil of this country, of a deep red color, and that is extensively used by the natives in painting, and is almost indelible in its character.

She thanked me kindly for this display of generosity; and having also supplied her with a pen made from the quill of an eagle's wing, I felt gratified that I had been enabled to comply with a desire which upon first thought appeared impracticable. The recompense of knowing that in this matter I had gratified her feelings, and that my kindness was duly appreciated by her, was sufficient compensation for me.

The last winter had not been so cold and inimical to the pursuit of the hunter as the one previous, and the savages had passed through it with comparatively little suffering.

In the month of September, while a number of the squaws of the village were gathering berries, at the distance of three or four miles, they were attacked by a brown panther, and one of them, with her papoose, destroyed by the ferocious beast. The others came running home, out of breath, frightened almost out of their senses, and related what had taken place. The warrior whose squaw and papoose had been left behind at the mercy of the panther, appeared to be very indignant at his loss, and his zeal and valor for the pursuit and destruction of the animal seemed to know no bounds.

But little time was consumed in getting ready for the chase; and about thirty of us (inclusive of the disconsolate husband and father) set out, armed and equipped in proper style. We were not long in reaching the vicinity where the bloody tragedy had been enacted; and calling a halt, at my suggestion the party separated, in order to form a circle around the locality where (from the account given us by the squaws) we supposed the enemy to be.

Sufficient time having been given for each man to take his position, and be ready for action in case the panther sought to make its escape, we commenced closing in toward the centre. Upon reaching the brow of a small hillock, one of the Indians pointed it out to

me, at the distance of about one hundred steps. It was near the foot of the hill, still in the act of replenishing its stomach from the remains of the pappoose. I immediately brought my rifle to bear upon it, and aiming for the region of the heart, pulled the trigger ; and, after one tremendous scream, it broke and run for its life, in the opposite direction from where I was.

It so happened that the line of its course led to the point occupied by the warrior whose squaw and pappoose had been destroyed by it, and who, a short time before, by both words and actions, exhibited so much courage and pluck in behalf of its destruction. But, seeing the panther, with all the speed which it was capable of exerting, approach the point where he had taken his position, his courage at once gave way, and relying upon his legs for his deliverance from the fangs of the enemy, with the speed of a frightened gazelle, he bounded over the ground in the direction of the village, without even an attempt at its destruction, or scarcely taking time to look back, in order to observe the imminence of his danger. The scene was so ludicrous that I could not refrain from a hearty laugh. To see this warrior, who but a short time before had exhibited so much zeal and heroism in the enterprise, now fleeing with such haste and determination when he was in no manner of danger, was more than my gravity could endure—even on so melancholy an occasion as this. We saw no more of our hero until we returned to the village, where we found him, silent and sullen, in no way disposed to converse on the day's adventure.

I had shot the panther too low; and although inflicting upon it a severe and perhaps fatal wound, it succeeded in making its escape from us. We pursued its trail some four or five miles, and, though it bled freely, we did not come up with it; when, on account of the lateness of the day, we gave it up.

The body of the pappoose was nearly consumed by the panther—there being but the head and a few of the larger bones left. The body of the squaw laid about ten feet from the pappoose, and although considerably mangled and disfigured, had not been much preyed upon by the hungry beast. The mortal remains of the mother, and the remaining fragments of the child, were taken to the village by the savages, and on the following day consigned to their final resting place.

CHAPTER IX.

DURING this winter, also, owing to the decline in Roxana's health, I was away from home as little as circumstances would admit—only spending sufficient time in the chase to keep up our supplies from time to time. There was but little of the time that she was able to be up, and the conclusion was forced upon my mind, that without a speedy and radical change in the state of her health, death would soon accomplish what little remained of his work. By times she was greatly annoyed by her cough, and though suffering but little physical pain, yet the lamp of life seemed to burn with less and less brilliancy, as time rolled on.

Although her condition was a source of constant pain and regret to me, to *her* the sky of the future was clear, and unobstructed by a single cloud. Her mind seemed as calm and placid as the blue ether above us, being well equipped and furnished with all the armor necessary to the Christian warfare. To her, Death had lost all his terrors, and was regarded as a friend, whose call was rather to be desired.

Notwithstanding I had been raised in a Christian land, by pious parents, there was yet something about her that I could not comprehend. Her calm resignation and humility, under all her trials and sufferings,

gave me a realizing sense of the power of the Christian's hope, that I never before had conceived of.

She was undoubtedly aware that the time of her departure was at hand, and would frequently, in her conversation, allude to the fact; but for a time, so repugnant was the thought to my feelings, that I could not reconcile my mind to it, and would vainly endeavor to convince her, as well as myself, to the contrary. Seeing that these thoughts were a source of trouble to me, she would, for the time being, refrain from pressing them upon me; but, subsequently, as occasion offered, would call my attention to it, with the evident intention of preparing my mind for the occasion.

This spring (1806) set in unusually early, and the weather was warm and pleasant from early in March, and had the effect, in an essential degree, of promoting Roxana's health; for as soon as it became settled, she took a change for the better. Had the usual amount of changeable and disagreeable weather followed in the footsteps of the spring of this year that is generally the case in this climate, it would have been impossible for her to have survived till April, as every symptom augured a speedy dissolution. I had given up all thought of ever seeing her again upon her feet, and the reader may judge of my agreeable surprise when I discovered that her strength in some measure was returning, and observed other signs of improvement. By the first of May she was able to sit up a little, and ultimately so far recovered as to be able to walk to the door of our hut without assistance.

Hohoako-Kiwa, in conjunction with several other chiefs of the nation, had for some time been meditating a descent upon the territory of the Flat-Heads, in order to avenge upon them an old grudge, and at the same time supply their necessities with an adequate number of the enemy's horses.

These two nations have been cordial enemies time out of mind, and take peculiar pleasure in afflicting each other with every enormity that their ingenuity can devise. About the first of June was fixed upon as the time to set out on this hostile expedition, and preparations for the event were in rapid progress. I had hoped, through some expedient of my own upon this occasion, I would be permitted to remain behind; but such was not the case. Hohoako-Kiwa would hear nothing in the form of an excuse from me; and had I not finally consented to accompany them upon this expedition, I verily believe he never would have forgiven me, and, perhaps, have lost all confidence in my former professions of friendship. On finally giving him my consent to go with them, he seemed almost overjoyed, and declared that on so important an occasion as this was likely to be, he could not do without me. I had two reasons for desiring to stay at home. The first and most important was, the reluctance I felt in leaving, for so long a time, Roxana; and the other was, the disgust I felt in being a participant in these barbarous forays.

But for several years I had been the child of the freaks of fortune, and why should I not be on this occasion also? I was not consulting my own will, but

that of those who had power over me, and, in some sense at least, I was not responsible for my own conduct in these transactions.

Every preparation having been completed, we left the rendezvous on the second day of June, and directed our course for a certain pass in the Rocky Mountains, (familiar to the Indians,) on the west side of which lay the country of the enemy. Our party consisted of about two hundred warriors, equipped and painted in true savage style. We were all mounted on horses, and, as usual, rode in single file, at a full canter—making but little noise, and only halting long enough to graze our horses and partake of a little food ourselves.

On the evening of the third day we reached the territory of the Flat-Heads, having traveled about one hundred and fifty miles. We were now within forty miles of the village on which the attack was to be made, and the remainder of the journey required great secrecy and caution, in order to avoid detection by the enemy. After a brief consultation, it was determined that, after grazing our horses and taking a few hours' rest, we would continue our journey to within fifteen or twenty miles of the village, and, having secreted ourselves as well as we could, would remain over the next day, in order to recruit ourselves and reconnoitre the adjacent country, preparatory to the consummation of our object on the following night. This arrangement was accordingly carried out; and about 2 o'clock at night, we reached a grove of timber, at about the proper distance from the village, as we supposed, in which we secreted ourselves.

Early in the morning spies were sent out, with instructions, after having made all the observations necessary touching the country, locality of the village, &c., to return at as early an hour in the evening as was possible. We remained secreted in the forest all day, and preserved a degree of quietude characteristic of these wild people, while preparing to attack an enemy.

About 8 o'clock in the evening the spies returned, giving us the desired information—reporting that the village contained about fifty huts, and was numerously inhabited by warriors, squaws and pappooses. They also reported having seen many fine horses grazing in the vicinity of the village. This last information was especially gratifying to the warriors of our party, as they are not only accomplished horse-thieves, but take great delight in the possession of a liberal supply of these animals.

Every thing being put to rights, we set out, on foot, for the enemy's quarters, expecting to arrive there about 1 o'clock at night. Our horses were (as usual on those occasions) left behind, in charge of a sufficient guard, until further word from us.

Having reached the vicinity of the village, a halt was ordered, and the party divided into three squads, properly officered, with orders to spare neither age nor sex, and the attack to be simultaneously made.

The greatest danger of alarming the fears of the sleeping enemy, was to be apprehended from their ever-watchful dogs, who are always upon the *qui vive*, in order to discover something to excite into action their

barking propensities. In case the enemy should be alarmed from any cause, on the proper signal being given, our party was to advance rapidly, and before they would have time to comprehend the nature of the danger with which they were menaced, rush upon them, from all sides, with sanguinary effect.

These arrangements being made, we continued our movements upon the village, with steps so light and well directed, that a person at the distance of ten feet could scarcely have heard us. In this way we moved forward, without even exciting the attention of the dogs, till within a few rods of the huts; when one of the canines, with scent more acute than his companions, alarmed the whole gang by a few shrill, nervous yelps. Prompt and vigorous action was now the highway to success; and, accordingly, a general rush and deadly attack was commenced by our party upon the bewildered inmates of the huts; and before they had time to gain their thresholds, to determine the cause of alarm to their dogs, they were cut down like grass before the scythe, and their bodies horribly mangled! Whether any of the inhabitants of the village escaped this massacre or not, is more than I can tell, but am of opinion not. Such was the sudden and vigorous nature of the attack, that escape was rendered almost impossible.

The contest lasted but a few minutes, when a village of near two hundred souls was silent in death. The horrors of this night's work could only be realized when daylight fully revealed them in the morning. At

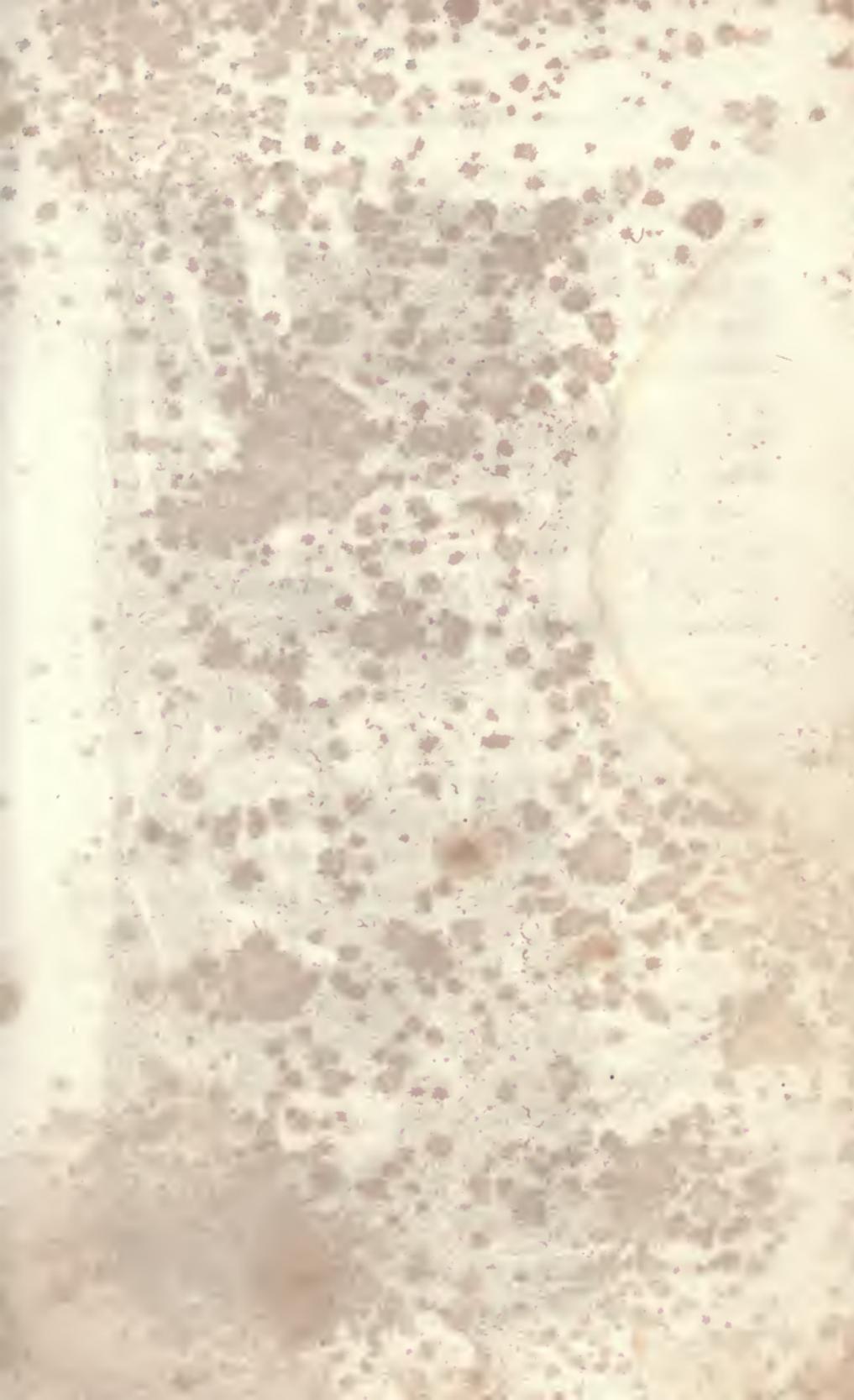
this time I visited most of the huts, and contemplated a picture of death and savage brutality, that has ever since remained fresh in my mind. Old and young, males and females, with bodies mangled and gory—sometimes in groups, and again at intervals from each other—met my gaze in every direction. The sight was not only disgusting to my feelings, but sickening, and caused me to shudder at the barbarous cannibalism of these people.

The war-dance, with its usual wild accompaniments, occupied the remainder of the night, after the accomplishment of this murderous act; and the fore part of the next day was occupied in scalping and plundering the dead.

The Black-Feet lost but two of their warriors in this engagement, in addition to a few others slightly wounded, and neither took nor lost any prisoners.

At the risk of my popularity with these people, I refused to take an active part in this outrage—regarding it as a piece of cold-blooded butchery, cowardly and dishonorable.

Having, in proper form, buried the two warriors who were killed by the Flat-Heads, and collected together all the spoils, with over fifty of the enemy's horses, we were ready to set out on our return. Our other horses, in the meantime, had been brought up; and after setting fire to every hut in the village, we left this scene of devastation and death. It was about 3 o'clock in the afternoon at the time of our departure, and we camped for the night upon the same spot of ground where we had laid concealed the day previous.



DEATH OF HOHOAKO KIWA.



We had but little noise in our camp on this night, owing to the fact, in part, that most of the savages had slept none the night previous, and were now disposed to rest—as well as from the fact that it was deemed by them an act of prudence, in order to avoid surprise from some new party of the enemy, who might be lurking about the country.

Early in the morning we were ready to resume our journey, but owing to one of those unlooked-for casualties with which we occasionally meet during the course of our pilgrimage through life, we were detained till the afternoon.

One of the horses taken from the enemy proved to be restive and vicious, and peremptorily refused to allow any one of our party to ride him. Hohoako-Kiwa, who had always piqued himself upon his horsemanship, undertook to bring the refractory animal to submission; and having leaped upon its back with the agility of a monkey, it reared and plunged with desperation; the chief applied the whip to it to the utmost extent of his ability. Finding this to be rather an uninteresting exercise, the horse finally took to his heels, and run with all the speed of which he was capable—the whip being freely applied in the meantime. Striking across the plain in an opposite direction from where we were, and having gone to the distance of perhaps half a mile, he stumbled and pitched forward, turning a complete summerset, throwing the chief with tremendous impetus several yards in advance of him, with his head and shoulders against a rock, fracturing his skull and killing

him instantly. By the time we reached the fatal spot, the horse had regained his feet, and was continuing his flight far in advance of us.

The scene before me (notwithstanding the horrors of the one I had just passed through) was exceedingly melancholy. Before me, in lifeless form, lay all that remained of one of the ablest and most brave of the chiefs of the Black-Foot nation ; and the one who had given the late expedition, as well as all others in which he had engaged, life and importance. I could not help but think this calamity was brought on him and his people by the special providence of the Almighty, in consequence of the cruel massacre inflicted upon a portion of the Flat-Heads but a few hours previous.

Although Hohoako-Kiwa was vindictive and cruel toward those he regarded as enemies, to his friends he was habitually kind and condescending, and was universally beloved and respected by them. There was but little vanity in his composition ; and upon no occasion did I observe airs of authority or superiority over his people, notwithstanding the dignity of his office. In all his transactions with his people, he was scrupulously just and truthful ; and in his death I felt that I had lost not only my best, but most influential friend. For several years his friendship for me had been warm and constant, and whatever his infirmities in other respects might be, I felt that in him I was deprived of a friend whose constancy of heart was not dependant upon external demonstrations of worldly glory, or the vanity of riches. With the aid of a Christian education, he would (in my opinion) not only have been a good, but a great man.

We prepared a kind of litter from a bear-skin, in which we conveyed his remains to the camp. It was the desire of us all that he should be taken home and interred near the village; but from the fact that the weather was very warm, and that we were at least three days' journey from there, (without any impediment to our progress,) it was thought best to bury him where we then were. An excavation was made in the ground near the camp, about two feet deep; the body was then wrapped in one of our best bear-skins, and then placed in the excavation. His arms, and implements of every kind, together with his apparel, were then placed by his side; and, after the usual ceremony was gone through by one of the other chiefs who accompanied us on this expedition, the body was covered with dirt and stones, and we prepared to set off on our journey.

The solemnity and regret exhibited by the savages on the death of their chief, was something that I had not before witnessed, upon the death of any one else, since my sojourn with them. I had come to the conclusion that those melancholy visitations were occasions of joy, rather than grief; but, in this case at least, I was mistaken; for a well-defined sorrow seemed to settle down upon the features of the whole party, and during the remainder of their journey they indulged but little in their usual mirth and vanity.

We reached our village on the evening of the fourth day of our homeward journey; and the inhabitants of the village who had remained at home, learning from us the sad intelligence concerning the death of Hohoako-Kiwa,

greatly lamented the calamity, and regarded their loss as almost irreparable.

I found Roxana's health about the same as when I left; and, as usual, she was much rejoiced that I was again permitted to return without having received any injury. She was very much affected with my account of the death of Hohoako-Kiwa, whom she could not help but respect, for his uniform kindness toward us both, ever since our arrival at the village.

The account of the massacre of the Flat-Heads I kept from her, knowing it would only have a tendency to excite her feelings, and thereby strengthen her disease.

A brother of Hohoako-Kiwa, who for some time had officiated as council chief, was duly inaugurated into the office of his deceased brother, under the name of Wah-Kiwan, ("the brave warrior.") The initiatory service took place on the first day of July, and was attended and participated in by a large concourse of savages from distant parts of the nation. Many of their most distinguished chiefs were present in honor of so important an occasion, as well as to ordain the new chief. The simplicity and solemnity by which the whole ceremony was characterized, were truly impressive. There was no effort at ostentation or display; but pure, unalloyed, primēval simplicity constituted both the beginning and the ending of the whole transaction.

The substance of the ceremony consisted in a solemn pledge, on the part of the new chief, to nourish and protect his people, and to hold himself in readiness, at

all times, to punish in an exemplary manner the enemies of their nation and people.

Upon the conclusion of this rite, an old chief, whose locks were as white as the driven snow, with great deliberation and dignity rose to his feet, and made a kind of eulogistic speech in behalf of the deceased chief. His remarks, though in their own language, was in substance as follows :

“Braves and warriors of the Black-Foot nation :—I have lived to see the snows of an hundred winters ; I have fought many battles and taken many scalps ; I was familiar with the bears and buffalo when most of you were not yet born. I was well acquainted with your late chief, and his father before him—they were both brave, and deserved well of our nation. Hohoako-Kiwa I sincerely loved—not because he was only brave, but also because he was faithful and just. I dandled him upon my knee when he was but a mere papoose, and have known him ever since. The Great Spirit, no doubt, had need of him, and hath called him to the great hunting-ground prepared for our people, and also where, before the fall of many more leaves, I will follow him.”

During the delivery of this address, the profoundest attention was given to the old warrior ; and that eye, which was dim and languid with age, (as he progressed in his remarks,) again kindled and flashed with its wonted lustre and fire.

Having finished his remarks, he slowly resumed his seat, and the assembly immediately broke up and dispersed.

From this time until winter set in, the most of my time was spent hunting, and laying in a supply of provisions that would last us till spring. During the fall of this year we had extraordinary success in the chase. Game, of almost every kind common to the country, was abundant, and we found but little difficulty in securing it to almost any extent we desired. I dried and laid in, on this occasion, a much larger quantity of meat than I had ever done before, and as circumstances turned out, it was well that I did so.

About the middle of October, Roxana was taken much worse, and, as time advanced, her disease seemed rapidly to culminate to a fatal crisis. Great physical prostration had again taken hold upon her, and, by times, she could not turn herself in bed, or speak above her breath. In the course of a few weeks, she became extremely emaciated; and, from every indication, I thought it was not possible for her to survive any considerable length of time. But when upon the very verge of death, (apparently,) her disease would seem, to some extent, occasionally to release the malignity of its grasp—as though it was sporting with the intensity of her sufferings—and, for a brief space of time, again permit her partially to recuperate her exhausted energies, when it would return with more severity than ever.

In this way she continued gradually to wear away,

until the fifth day of March, 1807, when death closed the scene of her mortal existence, and her spirit took its departure for that haven of rest prepared for the righteous, at the right hand of Him that sitteth upon the throne and judgeth all things well.

During the whole course of Roxana's lingering illness, I never heard a murmur or complaint from her, or even observed an expression in her countenance indicative of impatience or anxiety. Her whole being appeared to be merged in the good pleasure and will of her Maker, and was entirely satisfied to abide, with humility, whatsoever His providence deemed proper in her case.

Was I about to set out upon a mission to travel the world over, in search of a perfect exemplification of the power of the grace of God upon the human heart, I would despair of finding one more beautifully illustrative of this great truth than was the case of Roxana. By means of the long and severe chastening to which she had been exposed, her Christian character had developed itself in an extraordinary manner, and, like fine gold thoroughly purged by the heat of the fire, was void of every impurity.

Notwithstanding the joy I felt that all her sufferings were now over, and that she was unspeakably happy in Heaven, yet how utterly lost did I feel, and what gloomy forebodings took possession of my mind when I fully realized that Roxana was gone. She had for several years been my constant companion when at home, and perhaps the only one in the world who knew my condition, and could sympathize with me. Her happiness

had been the great object and centre of all my desires and exertions for several years, and I now felt as though all that had rendered my life at all endurable amongst these people had been taken away from me, and that henceforth my cup would be full of wormwood and gall. I felt no remorse of conscience in consequence of having come short of any known duty toward her; for so far as was possible under the circumstances, I spared neither time nor trouble in order to make her comfortable.

To a person tenderly reared in civilized society, as was the case with Roxana, neither the food upon which she had to subsist, or scarcely anything else with which we were provided, was calculated to contribute either to her health or comfort; but, knowing it was the best that was possible, she was entirely content. Times almost without number, she has expressed her gratitude to me for my attentions to her; and in her prayers uniformly asked the Lord, of His abundance, to suitably reward me for my kindnesses to her.

About three weeks before her death, she informed me of a beautiful dream she just had; and, as it made a lasting impression on my mind, with the permission of the reader, I will relate it in her own words:

“I dreamed that I died, and was carried by the angels to Heaven, where I beheld my father, and an innumerable number of redeemed spirits, clad in raiment white as snow, congregated around the Throne, singing praises to the Lamb. Upon entering the realms of bliss, I was greeted with ravishing demonstrations of joy, and my

Savior took me by the hand, and with a smile and cordiality of greeting which thrilled my soul with delight, welcomed me to the home of the blessed. His appearance was lovely beyond anything that my imagination in its loftiest flights had conceived, or of the power of words to describe. I saw the River of Life, clear as crystal, flowing through the Heavenly plain, and an inconceivable variety of ambrosial fruits kissing its refreshing waters. Birds of rarest beauty and plumage discoursed seraphic music, and flitted from branch to branch amidst the gorgeous foliage of the tree of Life. Myriads of angels, with golden pinions and extended wings, hovered around the Throne of the Lamb, and chanted His praises day and night. The brightness of the Heavenly City infinitely surpassed that of the Sun; and such was the glory and splendor thereof, that my soul was filled with the most exalted admiration and bliss. In my dream, I thought I became so inexpressibly happy in contemplating the glory and splendor of the scene before me, that I was completely lost and swallowed up in its contemplation. My capacity for enjoyment was infinitely enlarged, being as boundless as the domains of Heaven; and yet my soul was filled to the extent of its capacity, with a sense of joy and bliss which no words can describe. No exhibition of pain or suffering did I witness there. Joy, love and peace pervaded every countenance, and the fullness and completeness of our rest, like the waters of a mighty river, flowed on, and still on, through the infinitude of eternity.

But of all the beautiful objects that I witnessed in

my dream, there was none so lovely and enchanting to my gaze as the Redeemer of the world—for the brightness of His glory lighted up the heavens, and gave enchantment to the scene. His crown was of burnished gold, and sparkled in the rays of light refracted from the brow of Omnipotence, with a resplendent brightness that caused the stars to vail their faces in darkness. His presence was the glory of the city, and His praises constituted the theme of all tongues. * Oh ! the rapturous loveliness of this vision ! and how inadequate in description are my words."

This interesting dream was related by Roxana in a spirit and tone of voice that indicated to me that she appreciated it, in some sense, as a foretaste of that haven of bliss which was in reserve for her enjoyment at no distant day.

By the aid of my axe and auger, I made, from a few puncheons, a rough coffin, into which Ke-Ka placed the remains, after having carefully wrapped them in some of the finest fur that I could obtain for the purpose. By means of a wooden shovel, prepared by me for the occasion, I dug her grave to the depth of three and one-half feet. The locality for the same was selected by myself, at the distance of a mile from the village, upon the summit of a beautiful mound-shaped spot of ground, beneath the rich and ever green foliage of a stalwart, cone-shaped pine. With the exception of this tree, there was no timber within forty rods of it—and the ground in the vicinity was rolling, and covered during the summer and fall with a beautiful sward of grass.

About two o'clock on the seventh day of the month, with the assistance of a number of the Indians, I conveyed the remains to the grave prepared for their reception, where my last attentions to all that was mortal of Roxana were bestowed.

Many of the Indians, both male and female, attended the burial, and in deference to my feelings, showed as much respect as was consistent with their ignorance. They were much surprised and amused at the novelty of the proceeding, and were anxious to know why I did not procure the services of the chief, to officiate in the funeral service ; but upon being informed that in my country this was contrary to our religious belief, they gave me no more trouble.

Ke-Ka seemed very much affected at the death of Roxana. She had lived with us for a number of years, and her attachment to her had become strong indeed. She would sit for hours together, in the most melancholy and dejected mood, without uttering a word, while the tears would steal down her brawny cheeks, and drop to the ground. I consoled her feelings as well as I could, and presented her with a number of small articles which had belonged to Roxana, as mementoes of remembrance—which seemed to gratify her feelings very much.

On returning to my hut, after the interment, so desolate and lonely did I feel, that my life appeared to be bereft of every joy, and time bore upon me with a weight almost unendurable. My desire to leave the wretched abodes of the savages, since the death of Roxana, returned upon me with redoubled force—and, sink or swim,

live or die, I was determined to make the effort. With this resolution on my mind, before making the attempt, I concluded to enclose the grave of Roxana with a substantial fence, and adorn it with a quantity of wild flowers and shrubs. Accordingly, in the following month of May, I procured a number of substantial posts, and with the axe and auger, constructed a post and rail fence, which, although far from being a neat job, had, in a great degree, the quality of permanence. After having completed this part of the work, I procured a variety of beautiful wild flowers and shrubs, and planted them around and upon the grave ; and then, with slow and measured steps, returned to the village, with the thought upon my mind that, in all probability, I would never again behold the narrow resting place of all that was mortal of Roxana.

A few days before she died, she beckoned me to her, and told me that she expected to live but a short time, and that upon the parchment that I had prepared for her, she had written a letter to her mother and sisters, which, provided I ever succeeded in making my escape from the savages and returned to England, she desired I would convey to them ; which I faithfully promised to do. She then told me where I would find the parchment, and requested me, immediately after her death, to secure and preserve it in a sure place.

After her death, I found the letter as she had directed me, neatly folded up, unsealed, and with the proper direction upon the back. I subsequently opened it, and

found in it a lock of her hair neatly platted, designed as a last token of remembrance for her mother.

The following is a copy of her letter :

“ JUNE 15, 1806.

“ MY DEAR MOTHER AND SISTERS: Should this epistle providentially fall into your hands in the future, you will learn from it, that at the time it bears date, your unfortunate Roxana still survived; although, in consequence of a broken constitution and the ravages of disease, it is hardly possible for her to live many months to come. My dear mother, were I to detail to you the incidents connected with my captivity amongst the savages of Oregon, and the dreadful cruelties inflicted upon me by them, it would almost break your heart, and cause you to weep many bitter tears—which, pardon me, I do not mean to do. Permit me to say, however, that for two years I endured all that it was possible for me to bear up under, and that in consequence of the severity of my treatment, consumption has taken hold upon me, and has nearly accomplished its fatal work. I have scarcely enjoyed a well day for more than five years, and much of the time I have been confined to my couch. For upwards of four years I have been living in one of the villages of the Black-Feet Indians, under the care and protection of Mr. John Dixon, (formerly from England,) and who is likewise a captive to the savages, but in consequence of numerous bold adventures which met their approbation and gratified their vanity, he has become exceedingly popular with

them, and thereby has been enabled to protect me from outrage and insult. Had not Providence provided me with this friend and protector in a land of gross barbarism, I must have long since passed from earth.

Should Mr. Dixon ever return to England, there is no service you can render him that will be too great in return for the kindness and attention he has bestowed upon me. The affection of the tenderest brother could have done no more to assuage my sufferings, than has the constant and faithful attentions of Mr. Dixon.

Should it be consonant with the will of our Heavenly Master for him to hereafter return home, you will undoubtedly learn from his lips many of the incidents connected with my captivity, which are far too painful for me to relate to you.

This lock of my hair, I design as a last offering of love and respect to my mother. Adieu,

ROXANA."

CHAPTER X.

ABOUT the first of June, as was our custom, we set out for the prairies to spend some time in hunting ; and prior to setting out, I had resolved to make this the occasion of my escape—so long contemplated by me. Accordingly, I accompanied the savages on the enterprise, as usual ; but upon arriving on the hunting-ground I discovered that I had forgotten my powder-flask. (It is hardly necessary, perhaps, for me to inform the reader that this, on my part, was intentional, in order to furnish me with an excuse for a brief absence.) Upon making this unfortunate discovery, it became necessary for me to return to the village, in order to obtain the ammunition. The chief proposed sending one of the warriors to accompany me on the journey back ; but I told him it was unnecessary to divert any of his men from the object of our journey—that I would return myself, and, although the distance was not much short of fifty miles, they might expect me back on the evening of the second day from that time. This arrangement was entirely satisfactory to them—nor did they seem, in any sense, to suspect me of improper motives. So long had I been with them, and such was the confidence they entertained of the fidelity of my motives, that they regarded me as one of themselves in every respect.

On the next morning after reaching the hunting-ground, I set out on my return to the village, and during the day, kept my horse to a lively speed—a little after dusk arriving at the village; and after having informed some of the inhabitants who were left behind the object of my return, and partaking of a little dried venison in my cabin, as I supposed for the last time, retired to rest for the night, where, without sleeping a wink, I ruminated in my mind the dangers of the enterprise I had just undertaken. To say that my nerves at this time were a little unsteady, would convey but a faint idea of the emotions with which I was oppressed. Such was my anxiety on the subject, that I rolled and tossed myself all night. But the die was cast, and let the result be what it might, I was resolved to make the attempt

Before it was light in the morning I was up, and having provided myself with a quantity of dried meat, enough to last me a week, I mounted my horse and was off. In order to allay any suspicion that might exist in the minds of any of those in the village, I started, and continued to travel for several miles in the direction from whence I had come, as though I was returning to the prairies. But having got beyond observation, I wheeled my horse at a right angle, and struck with rapid speed for the old camp from which Moulton, Thornton, and myself had been so ruthlessly taken nearly five years before. My object in making for this point was, with greater precision to determine my course, in order to reach, as speedily as possible, some one of the stations

of the "Hudson Bay Company." About 12 o'clock on the second day after setting out from the village, I arrived at our old quarters—having spent the previous night without fire or blanket, in the wilderness, some twenty or thirty miles from the deserted camp. Here I halted, in order to graze my horse and replenish my own stomach.

Whilst thus engaged, what was my surprise and mortification in beholding Wah-Kiwan, and twenty of his warriors approaching me at the full speed of their horses. My flattering prospects prematurely perished; for it would have been the height of presumption in me now to have made any further effort in the prosecution of my purpose. I therefore resolved to submit to what seemed inevitable, and put the best face on the affair possible. Upon their coming up I hastened to them, and assuming an unusually joyous countenance, appeared very much rejoiced to see them.

They appeared to suspect, however, that all was not right, for they were demure, and but little disposed to talk. I told them that in returning to the prairies, as I had agreed to do, I had become bewildered and lost my way, and had only recognized my position upon coming unexpectedly in sight of the old encampment. They listened to my narrative with evident indications of doubt; and at length, Wah-Kiwan replied, that it was strange that I found the way from the prairies to the village without getting lost; and that, upon becoming bewildered, I should have turned the feet of my horse so suddenly from the course I was pursuing, and

that I should, by chance, reach this particular locality. I must confess that these doubts of the chief rather put my wits to rack, in order to meet them with a proper answer; but it was all important to me, as matters now stood, that I should at once furnish a reasonable solution to his queries. I told him that mystery was connected with many things that we almost daily encountered, and although it might seem strange to him that I should have thus lost my way and finally arrived at this point, it was nevertheless true, as his own eyes would bear witness. That perhaps, in my anxiety to return to the prairies, I had not been as particular in observing the course as I should have been, and having unobservedly got out of my way, I was unable afterwards to find it again.

I also informed him that, after reaching the camp, and thereby recognizing my error, it was my intention, after grazing my horse and partaking of a little food myself, to have set out on my return to the village. I also reminded them of the fact, that I had now been with them five years—during all which time they had ample proofs of my fidelity to them, and never before, upon any occasion, had cause to doubt my words.

To these arguments on my part, they made no further attempt at a reply—but for some minutes remained silent, as though they were revolving in their minds the probable truth of my remarks. At length they became more cheerful, and conversed freely on other topics, and having also grazed their horses and partaken of their lunch, we set off on our return to the village

To say that I was excessively mortified at this summary result in my long cherished scheme of escape, would be but to tell half the story. I almost despaired of ever seeing my condition any better than it then was, for so signal a failure on my part would increase the chances against me, in any similar attempt in the future, by destroying to some extent the confidence the savages had heretofore reposed in me—thereby increasing their watchfulness upon all my movements.

We reached the village late on the evening of the following day, and in the mean time no further allusion had been made to the unfortunate circumstance of my getting lost in the woods. As to the effect of my explanation of the affair upon their minds, I was, as yet, in total ignorance.

I was not a little puzzled with the idea as to how these warriors, whom I had left at the prairies fifty miles from the village, and who designed to be absent two or three weeks, had so soon got word of my departure, and with such promptitude followed me up. But on my return to the village, the mystery was solved in a very natural way.

I learned from some of them, that on the same day that I had left the prairies, in order to get the powder that I had forgotten, the party had discovered fresh signs of a numerous party of the Snake Indians; and, as our party was by no means large, it was thought prudent for the present to evacuate the field to the enemy. Accordingly, about noon of the same day that I left the village in order to make my escape, the whole party re-

turned, and learning that I had set out in the morning on my return to camp, and that by some mishap they had missed me on the way, a party, headed by the chief, immediately set out in pursuit of me, lest unfortunately I might reach the prairies and fall into the hands of the Snakes, and be destroyed. They took my trail, and with the aptitude of blood-hounds in an enterprise of this kind, they followed me up with as much ease and precision as a boy would thread the promenade on London Bridge.

On the third day after our return, Wah-Kiwan, the chief, came to me and informed me that himself, in council with his warriors, had determined to submit my case to the "*Qualle*." I informed him that I was ignorant of his meaning, and requested him to explain himself to me. He then informed me that it was the opinion of his warriors that I had made an attempt to escape from them; but, inasmuch as my character had hitherto been good, and there was no positive evidence against me, they had unanimously agreed to refer my case to the "*Qualle*," in order to test the truth or falsity of my statements.

He then explained to me the nature of the "*Qualle*," which I found to be a species of trial by ordeal, which was practiced during the dark ages in England, and in most of the countries of Continental Europe, and founded on the same reasoning, to wit: a supposed reference of the justice of the controversy to the Supreme Being, or, in this case, to the Great Spirit of the Black-Foot nation—who, these ignorant people believe, will

always interfere in behalf of the innocent, and save them from unmerited punishment and disgrace.

I endeavored to convince Wah-Kiwan, that their suspicions of my fidelity and good intentions toward them were unfounded, and did me great injustice, after so many manifestations by me to the contrary. He replied, that the proceeding was in conformity to the customs of the nation in all cases of this kind, and that if innocent, as I claimed to be, I had nothing to fear; that if the "*Qualle*" declared in my favor, I would be reinstated to the full confidence of the nation; but if against me, death was the penalty.

Finding that nothing I could say or do was likely to be of any service to me in my present circumstances, I consented to accompany him to the place of trial, which I found already prepared, about two miles from the village.

The "*Qualle*" consists of a cord made of the inside bark of a species of poplar that grows in this country, and is about seventy feet in length—attached to one of the topmost branches of a tree, the other end extending to the ground. This bark is stripped from the tree in pieces about ten feet long, three inches in breadth, and a fourth of an inch thick, and then knotted together until the desired length is obtained. The accused is then forced to ascend the tree to which the cord is attached, and then descend it to the ground. If the cord breaks, or any of the knots slip, by means of which the culprit is precipitated to the ground, he is held to be guilty of the offense charged—and upon striking the earth, is immediately attacked and hewn to pieces by the savages.

Upon approaching the spot and learning the nature of the evidence that I was required to adduce touching my innocence, in order to meet the demands of this singular tribunal, I had but precious little hopes of satisfying the demands of the law, save at the expense of my life—and least of all were my spirits buoyed up by the faith I entertained in the saving power of the Great Spirit of their nation.

Before making an effort to ascend the tree, I tried to get hold of the cord in order to try its strength, but the savages forced me away, for reasons, I suppose, purely *technical*.

Seeing no alternative but submission on my part, I commenced climbing the tree, amidst the shouts and screams of the savages. Although I considered myself a good climber, by the time I reached the branch to which the cord was attached I felt considerably the worse of the wear—for in my ascent, I had the assistance of but two limbs to help me on my way. At length I reached the point from which the most critical part of the performance was to commence, and having taken sufficient time to recover my breath, and to some extent quiet my nerves—after carefully examining the manner in which the cord was fastened to the limb, and satisfying myself that at this point it was safe—I cautiously commenced my downward motion, and succeeded, without any accident, in reaching about half the length of the cord. At this success my spirits began to revive, and hope again sprang up in my breast, when, to my surprise and mortification, two of the savages seized

hold of the end of the cord, and commenced running at the top of their speed—describing a complete circle in their motion. In the mean time, the whole party set up a boisterous howl, and appeared almost frantic with merriment at the novelty of my position, and my evident fright. I shouted to them to let go of the cord, but this only made the matter worse. After clinging to it for some time, in the momentary expectation of its snapping asunder and dashing me to the ground, I again commenced the descent, notwithstanding the difficulties attending my efforts, in consequence of the motion and inclination of the cord. At this juncture of the investigation, I had but faint hopes of escaping with my life, for I thought it scarcely possible that the slender cord of bark would be able to stand the severe test to which it was being subjected. But to my astonishment, and contrary to my expectations, I ultimately reached the ground in safety. When I had approached to within perhaps ten feet of it, the two savages let go of the cord, and suffered me to land without further molestation. But so much was my strength exhausted by the severity of labor to which I had been subjected, and my fright, that when I reached the ground, it was with difficulty that I could stand. The savages, however, came to my relief, and in their rude manner, congratulated me upon the successful issue of my cause, and conducted me to a log and seated me upon it.

The chief then informed me that, the Great Spirit having pronounced in my favor, I was fully restored to the confidence and respect of his people. This infor-

mation was of course gratifying to my feelings ; but, at the same time, it failed to infuse into my mind any great amount of respect for the impartiality with which (it was said) the Great Spirit of their nation punished the guilty. However, I felt rejoiced that my restoration to their former confidence and favor would afford at least one more chance at escape—which, notwithstanding the disastrous results of my first effort in that way, I was resolved, at the proper time, to put into practice.

Having fully rested myself, in company with the savages, I returned to the village, and during the time I was with them, after this occurrence, no allusion, by any one, was ever made to the circumstance, and they seemed to regard me in every respect, as far as I could discover, with the same confidence that they had done before. I deemed it prudent, however, before making another attempt at escape, to remain with them awhile longer, in order to confirm their good opinions concerning my integrity, by some new instances of adventure with them.

My stock of powder had by this time become very much reduced, and it was only by using great economy that it held out so long. A small portion of the stock that I originally had I carefully put away, to be used by me only in procuring means of subsistence, and in self-defense while engaged in making my escape. I had managed, in various ways, in deterring the savages from acquiring the use of my rifle—knowing that if they once succeeded in this, my ammunition would soon disappear, and the hold which I had upon their superstition would be lost.

I accompanied them, and took part, after this, in various hunting excursions, and in the mean time assumed a cheerful and contented mind.

In the month of July of this year, while engaged in hunting near the source of a small stream that rises in the Rocky Mountains and flows into the Missouri river, the chief, in company with half a dozen of his warriors, returned to camp one evening, bringing with them a quantity of gold, which they said they had picked up from a sand-bank that they came upon in their travels, at a considerable distance from the camp. These specimens had the appearance of once having been in a state of fusion, and by some commotion of nature been severed from the general mass—assuming, in the process of cooling, an almost endless variety of form.

From the size of the specimens brought to the camp, as well as from the accounts given by the savages, this metal must have existed in large quantities. I desired them to conduct me to the place where they had procured it, but this they peremptorily refused to do—assigning as a reason, that the Great Spirit of their nation had intrusted the secret to them alone, and it would be a betrayal of confidence were they to intrust it to others. The chief, however, made me a present of one of the specimens, which, in England, would have been worth, perhaps, two pounds.

These savages have no idea of the value of this metal, except that which they attach to it in the way of trinkets, to be worn upon their persons. In this respect, they do not differ from other barbarous nations; for in the

use of these ornaments they are excessively prodigal. It is common for both the males and females to adorn their persons most profusely with trinkets of gold, moulded by them into a variety of forms, in order to suit the peculiar taste of the wearer.

I had often, on former occasions, endeavored to learn from them where they obtained this metal, but uniformly without success. In visiting the mines to procure it, advantage was always taken of times and circumstances that were not calculated to excite my suspicions, and the consequence was, that notwithstanding a residence of five years amongst them, I never succeeded in fathoming this secret. This is, perhaps, not to be wondered at, when the locality of these deposits is kept a profound secret from a large majority of their own people, from the fact (as they suppose) that if every one knew of their locality, through immoderate and constant use, they would soon become exhausted.

An equitable system of policy exists, however, in the distribution among the people of the proper quantum of trinkets, and dissatisfaction from this cause seldom arises.

The chief informed me that this was a new deposit, which they had hitherto known nothing about, and that it promised to be more productive than any of their old ones.

About this time a couple of deputies arrived at the village from the southern part of the nation, informing us that a party of the Crow Indians had made a sally upon their territory, and stole a number of their horses,

and soliciting aid from us in their recovery, and also in the chastisement of the intruders.

Preparations, in order to obey a request at once so reasonable and just, were immediately commenced, and on the following day we set out upon our mission of retaliatory justice. On the evening of the third day of our journey, we arrived at the quarters of our friends, where we found about two hundred warriors awaiting our arrival, anxious to avenge the recent outrage upon the sovereignty of their nation.

Before setting out on this mission, I made all the arrangements which I deemed necessary preparatory to another attempt at escape; for I thought it probable that during this campaign, some favorable opportunity for that purpose might present itself—in which case I was determined to embrace it.

The enemy had so much the start of us, that the council deemed it inexpedient to try to overtake them on their homeward march, but determined to make a bold and energetic push for their territory, and then regulate their motions as circumstances might seem to require. On the second day of September, we left our camp for the enemy's country, and after a toilsome march of three days, reached the northern boundary of their territory. A council was again called, and it was determined to send out a number of scouts, in order to make observations touching the enemies' locality, &c.

Twenty-five scouts were sent out in different directions, with orders to return to camp as soon as possible, after having thoroughly scoured the country in search of signs

of the retreating enemy. During the absence of the scouts, we remained in camp, preserving the most commendable quietude. This interval of inactivity was occupied by me in reflecting upon the means of my escape, and the following plan was ultimately fixed upon for future use, provided circumstances met my expectations. There was little doubt but that we would have a struggle with the enemy, and that, as usual on these occasions, it would take place after night. My plan of escape, therefore, was to disappear under cover of the darkness of night, at the time the belligerent parties were fairly hitched in mortal combat; and having made the best possible use of my time during the remainder of the night, secrete myself in the morning, and so remain all day.

By adopting this plan, I thought it reasonable to suppose the Black-Feet would conclude that I had either been killed or carried away by the enemy. At all events, upon the supposition that I had escaped from them, they would hardly venture to search for me in the enemy's country.

A part of the scouts returned to camp on the evening of the second day from the time of setting out, and reported having fallen in with the trail of the retreating Crows, and having followed it a considerable distance, they at length came in sight of the smoke of a village, which, upon close observation, they ascertained to contain about seventy-five huts, and a large number of warriors, who appeared to be engaged in the act of rejoicing over some bold achievement. Our party at once came

to the conclusion that a portion of these people must be those who had done the mischief.

The remaining part of the scouts having returned, by the time day began to dawn in the east we were in motion, under guide of the scouts, and, after having traveled all day, and till nine o'clock at night, called a halt, and, hastily disposing of our meal, continued our journey on foot—our horses, as usual, being left in charge of a number of the party. About two o'clock in the morning we reached the enemy's village, and while in the act of marching to the attack, in accordance with the plan agreed upon, we were discovered by some of the enemy who were loitering about the outskirts of the village, and the alarm given. Before we had time to reach the huts (although advancing with great rapidity) a shower of arrows were discharged upon us by them, and a number of our party fell. The conflict now became general, and, from every indication, sanguinary. At this stage of the affair, I instantly disappeared from amongst them—unobserved, I believe, by a living soul, and rapidly moved off in a southerly direction.

My object had been, after going some distance in this direction, to change my course, and travel in a north-westerly direction, in the hope of reaching the territory of the Hudson Bay Company; but in consequence of my ignorance of the country, and the darkness of the night, I became confused in my mind and mistook my reckoning, which, as the reader will see, was the cause of a world of suffering and trouble to me.

What the result of the contest between the two par-

ties of savages was, of course I never learned ; but from appearances at the time of my departure, I was of the opinion that if the Black-Feet succeeded at all in the chastisement of their enemy, their laurels would be dearly bought, as the Crows seemed to be not only numerous, but well prepared for their reception. But, to a people so accustomed to victory in almost all their contests with the neighboring tribes as the Black-Feet were, the odds would have to be great indeed, ere they would succumb to the prowess of the enemy.

I traveled during the remainder of the night, making the necessary angle, as I supposed, in order to reach the point of my destination. As day began to dawn, I secreted myself beneath the foliage of a thicket of under-brush, where I remained all day.

During this interval of inactivity, I had time to revolve in my mind the magnitude of my undertaking ; and in contemplating the many difficulties and dangers to which I would necessarily be exposed, in making the long journey before me, even in view of the most prosperous results, I almost despaired of success.

An unbroken wilderness, of many hundreds of miles in extent, lay before me, infested with barbarous savages and ferocious beasts ; and it was hardly to be expected that, for so long a time as I would necessarily be engaged in making this journey, I would be so fortunate as to escape the malignancy of both these enemies ; besides my constant exposure to numerous other contingencies of perhaps equal danger. But I had now been in captivity to the savages for five years, and, without a

desperate effort on my part, I must live and die with them ; the thought of which, I could not for a moment endure. Let the issue of the matter be what it might, I regarded the effort on my part as being commendable, and worthy of my best energies. I therefore reconciled my mind to meet with courage and in a proper spirit every possible evil that might befall me while in pursuit of this, the great object of my heart.

I had with me a small quantity of dried meat, which the savages designed to last me through the campaign with the Crows ; and, after this was exhausted, I would be forced to rely upon my rifle for supplies—which, by the by, had never failed me in an emergency of this kind.

As soon as night had again covered the earth with its sable mantle, I pursued my journey, and as daylight began to appear in the morning, stopped to rest myself beneath the branches of a cluster of young elms, and being very tired, soon fell asleep, and did not wake till near noon ; when, after partaking of some of my venison, I again set out on my way. From this time forward, I traveled altogether in daylight, and rested myself during the night.

In this way, my toilsome journey was prolonged till the second day of November—nearly two months from the time I set out. A few of the more prominent incidents with which I came in contact in the mean time, I will now proceed to relate.

On the 15th day of September, as I was progressing on my journey, I suddenly came upon an Indian village, and was in imminent danger of losing my life. With-

out expecting a casualty of this kind at the time, my mind was wholly absorbed in contemplating the probabilities of my escape, when, emerging from a dense wood, I found myself almost within the purlieus of the village limits. That I had been observed was evident, from the rapid retreat of a number of squaws and naked children. My condition was extremely perilous, and I instantly sprang back into the woods. Presently three warriors, with bows and arrows in their hands, cautiously approached the spot where I had emerged from the wood. By this time, I had retired at a little distance, and taken up my position behind the trunk of a large tree—regarding it as dangerous to undertake to effect my escape by flight, when the enemy was so close upon me. Having reached the edge of the wood where I had been observed, they stopped, and commenced peeping and peering in every direction, in order to get their eyes upon me.

While thus employed, a prudent regard for my own safety dictated to me that this was the proper time to make the best disposition possible of a bad case. At all events, I could hardly make it any worse. The largest savage of the three occupied a position a little in front of the other two. My rifle was already in position against the side of the tree, and bringing it to bear upon the region of the heart of the large Indian, I pulled the trigger, and leaping into the air at least three feet, he dropped upon his face, quivering in death. A nervous shout from the two other savages followed the report of my gun, succeeded by a rapidity of flight that

would have been credible to the speed of thorough-bred greyhounds. And, by the way, after this adventure, my own speed was by no means contemptible, for upon it I supposed my life depended.

Varying my course, in order to avoid the village, during the remainder of the day and a portion of the succeeding night, I passed over a credible extent of territory.

To what tribe these savages belonged is more than I can tell, as they differed in some respects in appearance from any I had seen. It is probable that the warriors of this village, with few exceptions, were, at the time of this occurrence, absent on a hunting tour, as upon this hypothesis only could I account for the appearance, on so important an occasion as this, of so few of them.

I entertained serious fears of being pursued, and perhaps waylaid by them; and to avoid a contingency of this kind, I took pains to conceal my trail as much as possible, thereby rendering it difficult of pursuit. Whether these fears were well founded or not, is more than I can say—at any rate, I never saw or heard from them afterwards.

On the night of the 20th of this month, while endeavoring to compose my mind to sleep after a weary day's journey, near the source of a small ravine, I was aroused by the tumultuous howling of what appeared to be legions of wolves. At first, they seemed to be at a considerable distance, but from the gradual increase in the volume of noise, they were evidently approximating the place of my rest; and from the known audacity

of these animals when pressed by hunger, I felt but little disposed to enter the arena with them; though circumstances seemed to require on this occasion that I should give them a cordial, if not an enthusiastic reception. I collected together a quantity of dry leaves and sticks, and having set them on fire by means of the flint in my gun and a little powder, I was in hopes the conflagration would keep them at bay. They still approached nearer and nearer, however, and as a last precautionary movement on my part, with rifle in hand, I climbed into the branches of a small tree that stood near, and composedly awaited their approach.

While the fire burned they preserved a respectful distance, but in the course of a couple of hours, it having all died out, they ventured up in great numbers, and made the night hideous with their wild and sonorous music. Judging from their noise and the moving mass which I was enabled to distinguish through the darkness, there must have been a hundred in the gang. I was not able to get a moment's rest during the night—for besides the perils of submitting myself to the arms of Morpheus while astride the branch of a tree, the incessant howling of the wolves drove all desire for this luxury from my eyes. During the night I fired my rifle twice amongst the moving mass, with the hope of at least frightening them away—which, upon both occasions, had for the time being the desired effect; but they soon rallied again, apparently as courageous as before. As day began to dawn in the east, they departed for their dens, and to my great joy, left me again

to the peaceful contemplation of my own mind. On descending the tree in the morning, I found that one of the discharges of my rifle had taken effect upon the vitals of one of these canines, as a portion of its bones were left strewed upon the ground, a standing testimony of the remorseless hunger of its companions.

On the night of the 30th of the same month, (September,) I again found myself in a most perilous situation. I had quartered myself for the night upon the summit of a slight elevation of ground, beneath a kind of canopy formed by a union of the branches of numerous shrubs and vines. Sometime in the night, I was aroused from my sleep by a deep gutteral growl, which seemed at no great distance from me. From the sound of the noise I was convinced that it proceeded from a grizzly—and only by the most prompt and desperate effort on my part could I expect to save myself from the devouring jaws of this monster. I instantly sprang to my feet, at the same time clutching my rifle in one hand and my knife in the other.

The night was moderately dark, and my fire had entirely gone out. For some time after gaining my feet, I looked in every direction, in order to get my eyes on the disturber of my repose, but apparently to no effect, as I was able to recognize nothing that my imagination could torture into a grizzly, or, in fact, the form of any other animal. While thus standing, intently gazing around, another hideous growl drew my attention to the branches of a large oak tree, which stood in the immediate vicinity; and, to my amazement, I there beheld,

squatting upon a limb, an animal that I recognized at once as being a panther of large size, apparently in the proper attitude to leap upon me. Its eyes, in the darkness, glowed like two balls of fire, and my danger was evidently most imminent. Time was precious, and the advantage would probably result to the assailing party ; at any rate, under the circumstances, I regarded the initiative the safer policy, and, accordingly, was not slow in bringing my rifle upon a level with the beast, and aiming my ball for that part of its body lighted up by the reflection of its eyes, fired upon it, when the monster rolled off the limb, and with tremendous force came crashing to the ground. After discharging my gun, I immediately drew my knife, in expectation of a hand-to-hand encounter with the enemy. But to my infinite delight, I soon discovered that in this respect I need be under no apprehension, as a state of profound silence soon convinced me that its aggressive principles were done for forever, and that its malignant spirit had already taken its departure.

After rekindling my fire, I took a light in my hand and approached the place where it laid, and found it to be a very large brown panther. My ball had entered its head between and a little above its eyes, and taking an upward direction, carried away a considerable part of the skull. Half an inch higher, and I would have missed it entirely ; and then, no doubt, I would have had a most interesting time in order to have maintained the supremacy of the field with so chivalrous a knight of the species feline.

Such had been the excitement, to say nothing of the terror that had taken hold upon me during these transactions, that I felt no disposition to sleep during the remaining portion of the night; but I passed the time away as best I could, sitting by my fire till morning.

After this adventure, I met with nothing serious on my way till the 5th of October. On this day, as I was in the act of crossing a narrow prairie, I beheld away in the distance on my right what I took to be six Indians on horseback, rapidly approaching in the direction where I was. I immediately sunk down and concealed myself beneath the high grass. I was very fearful that they had seen me, and that the object of their present mission was my capture, if nothing worse. In these fears, however, I was happily disappointed; for they rode on past me without checking the speed of their horses in the least, or apparently taking notice of any passing object. They soon disappeared among the timber at the other end of the prairie, when I again rose to my feet and continued on my way.

On the 13th, I encountered a precipitous hill, upon the north side of which a tremendous slide had recently taken place, carrying with it a great number of trees and rocks into the valley below. At the foot of the hill, along the whole length of the rear end of the slide, in great abundance, was collected together in puddles a substance which very much resembled quicksilver, and upon which the rays of the sun had a most luminous and beautiful appearance. Its glowing brightness was such as to sensibly affect the sight by looking upon it

for any considerable length of time. Such was the abundance of this substance, that I might have gathered gallons of it in a very brief space of time.

My wonder at this singular phenomenon was greatly excited ; for although I had heard of quicksilver mines, yet I had hardly realized in my own mind the fact of their existence in any other part of the world, much less the idea of their exemplification in so remarkable a manner in this wild and almost uninhabited region of the country. Not only in its general appearance, but in its extreme versatility, it resembles that sold in the shops of London, and other European cities ; and I am fully persuaded in my own mind, that this is the same substance.

On the night of the 17th, I was much annoyed by the almost constant howling of wolves, and the occasional mournful cry of a panther ; but, from some cause, they gave me no farther trouble, and although I slept but very little, I had the satisfaction of retaining possession of my humble couch.

The greater part of the 21st I spent in concealment at the source of a deep and almost impenetrable ravine. Early on the morning of this day, I discovered that I was in the vicinity of the habitations of a tribe of savages, as I saw in advance of me a number of squaws picking up sticks. I changed my course in order to avoid them, and accepted of the protection afforded by the first place of security with which I met ; for traveling in daylight where I then was, I regarded as hazardous in the extreme. After night had fairly set in, I

continued my journey, and traveled all night, in order to get as far beyond the locality of these savages as possible by morning.

I had now been subsisting for more than a month upon the game that I chanced to kill with my rifle on the way, and hitherto had met with little inconvenience from short allowance. But for the succeeding twelve days of my wanderings, I met with scarcely any game, and was in imminent danger of starving to death. And had it not been for one of those fortuitous circumstances which occasionally cross our path under the most desperate fortune, even at a time when hope has abandoned its mission of mercy, these facts would never have been narrated by me. But the sequel will show the result.

The painful conclusion had for some time forced itself upon my mind that I had lost my way, and that, instead of advancing in the direction of the territory of the Hudson Bay Company, the probability was, that I was wandering about to no purpose, in this wild and inhospitable country.

These thoughts, added to the prospect of absolute starvation, in connection with all my other troubles and difficulties, caused me almost to despair and give myself up for lost. For a month and a half I had now been contending with the fury of the elements above, as well as that of prowling beasts and wandering savages; and from aught that appeared, I was no nearer the great object of my heart than I was the day I set out. My condition at this time was indeed pitiable, and my distress can never be fully appreciated by

any living creature. The last morsel of food that I had was consumed by me on the morning of the 22d, after which I set out on my journey with the hope that I would come upon some game during the day; but in this I was doomed to disappointment, for, although I was diligent in the use of all the means calculated to insure success, yet, during the whole day, I came upon nothing in form of fish, fowl or beast; and in the evening, weary and hungry, I laid down to spend the night.

By dawn of day on the morning of the 23d, I resumed my course, with hopes of better success on this day; but, as though the star of my fortune had gone out forever, as on the preceding day, I found nothing, and in an almost famishing condition was obliged to spend another night.

On the 24th, it rained all day, and I was drenched from morning till night; nevertheless, the day was fully occupied by my labors for subsistence. Sometime in the afternoon of this day, while following the margin of a small stream, I shot a fowl of the crane species, and hastily removing its feathers and intestines, in an incredibly brief space of time had it roasting over a brisk fire. So great were the cravings of my appetite, that before it was sufficiently cooked, I commenced devouring it; and, although it was exceedingly poor, I thought it excellent. But a few minutes served me for its consumption, and my hunger was still unappeased. This timely relief, however, added greatly to my strength, and I continued my travels till dark, without even getting a glimpse of any thing else that would have been useful to me as food.

The 25th was also spent to no purpose, so far as game was concerned; and with the exception of an antelope, which I failed to get a shot at, I saw nothing that would afford me relief. Weary in body, and broken in spirit, I threw myself upon the ground, at the base of a large tree, in order to spend the night. I soon fell asleep, and dreamed that I was in the midst of a great variety of game, consisting, in part, of deer, elk, and buffalo, and that I killed a great many of them. Upon waking from my sleep to a consciousness of my condition, what was my mortification on finding my vision of plenty the deception of a mere dream.

On the 26th, the only relief I obtained in my starving condition was a snipe, which I killed while passing along. This bird was about the size of an English quail, and in color very much resembled it. It afforded me an apology for a meal, and to my taste was the most delicious food that I ever ate.

The 27th was utterly barren of results, in the way of supplying my necessities. And from this time forward to the afternoon of the second day of November, I was able to procure nothing in the way of food. Such had become my extreme weakness and exhaustion, that on the 31st day of October I found myself unable to advance any farther on my way, and beneath the shadow of a venerable spruce, laid down upon the ground, resigning myself a martyr to cold and hunger.

Perhaps there is no death that can befall us so prolific of the extremes of misery and wretchedness, as that by starvation. In its more advanced stages, grim-vis-

aged hunger, in form of a hideous monster, rears its head aloft, and with a mighty arm forces under its despotic rule not only all that is noble and exalted in morals and religion, but all the other passions of the heart. So that the most gentle, loving females, pressed by this demon power, have destroyed their own offspring in order to appease its cravings.

It is true that my experience does not go to the extent of *actual* death from this cause; yet I certainly passed through every stage short of it, on this occasion. My whole being was a prey to the lusts of its power; and I thought, cared, or dreamed of nothing, but how to gratify the ceaseless gnawings of appetite.

While laying in this hopeless condition, unable to move either hand or foot, and with my mind delirious from the greatness of my misery and distress, I was rescued from the jaws of death by a party of Mexican traders, who, on the 2nd day of November, providentially passed that way on their return home. Upon perceiving me, several of them dismounted from their horses, and seeing that I was not dead, and from appearances, as well as from a few signs which I gave them, learning that I was perishing from starvation, they prepared a little food and gave it to me. Two of their number remained with me all night, and by giving me small allowances of food at short intervals through the night, by the next morning I felt much improved; and by two o'clock in the afternoon, was able to ride on horseback. At their request, I gave them a brief sketch of my life, from the time I was taken captive by the Indians up to

the present. They appeared much interested in my narrative, and expressed their sympathy for my misfortunes.

They informed me that I was upon the confines of Mexico, and that the section of country through which (for the last ten days of my travels) I had passed, was nearly destitute of game, from the fact that for many years it had been much visited by the hunters from Mexico, as well as by those of a number of tribes of Indians.

I could scarcely realize the fact, that in traveling as I supposed in the direction of Vancouver's Island on the Pacific, I had so far lost my way as to have reached the territory of Mexico; and yet I dared not question my authority. I thanked the Lord, however, for the deliverance He had thus sent me, though at so great a cost on my part, and in a way that I had not expected. Both of the men who were left with me could talk broken English, and they advised me to accompany them to Mexico as my only means of safety, and one that would ultimately afford me a chance to return to my own country.

Of course, under the circumstances, I readily embraced their advice; and being supplied by them with a horse, went with them to their own country. Being entirely destitute of money, as well as decent apparel, my return home, as a matter of course, had to be deferred until I could provide myself with a proper supply of these essentials.

The people generally with whom I have become ac-

quainted, seem to take considerable interest in my behalf, and through their influence, I obtained my present situation as shepherd to Castro Urego, a wealthy Spaniard, of this country. The term of my service is for one year; at the end of which time, I am to receive for my services a sum of money about equal to one hundred pounds sterling, when I shall immediately set out for England, by way of New Orleans in America.

Here Mr. Dixon's notes terminate, and, as a consequence, our labors with them. By way of explanation, however, we will inform the reader that Don Zeno (to whom reference is made in the introduction) informed Mr. Winter, that before Mr. Dixon's term of service was up, he was attacked by a malignant fever, and after lingering in great distress for about three weeks, died, and was buried under his father's directions.

EDITOR.







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